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THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGITIMACY

The speech Mr. Churchill delivered on Tuesday was one of his most effective essays in the art of debating. Whether he used his opportunity to advance our cause by any flashes of political wisdom is another question. Certainly what he told the world about the magnitude and efficacy of the British effort was impressive and in its marshalling of facts persuasive. Everything turns on whether he is right in the belief that the war can be as good as won by bombardment from the air. What his calculations are was revealed in the passage in which he looked forward to the day when Germany's fighter defences will be eliminated and our bombers can range over her territory with no opposition more formidable than "flak." On the supposition that the Prime Minister means that this situation must be reached before we invade Western Europe, German radio commentators have been quick to add—for Russia's benefit—that no invasion need be looked for earlier than late summer. That remains to be seen. Both in what it said and in what it left unsaid the speech left us in some doubt as to the place the Second Front holds in Mr. Churchill's calculations.

When he turned from strategy to politics, there was one outstanding passage in the speech on which we may congratulate Mr. Churchill. His description of Marshal Tito's gallant struggle in Yugoslavia was as eloquent as it was generous, and he left the world in no doubt of his sentiments towards General Mihailovitch and the faction that surrounds King Peter. About Greece he was negative and unhelpful, while the astonishing passage he devoted to Italy was a challenge to all who cling to the hope that a democratic Europe will emerge from our victory. Indeed, in declaring that "this is no time for ideological prejudices," Mr. Churchill took his stand as the forthright defender of "expediency" and Darlanism. The idea that the Allies are supposed to be fighting for certain political principles and rights seems to be cynically discarded from his mind. Nothing counts save military victory.

It is part, however, of Mr. Churchill's romantic attitude towards tradition that he rates the institution of monarchy more highly than those who have suffered under it over the greater part of Europe. What in this modern world of realities does it mean when he bids us look on the King and Badoglio as "the legitimate government of Italy"? The House of Savoy has never claimed that it ruled by right divine. It came to the throne of a united Italy after a revolutionary movement which owed its inspiration and its most gallant exploits to leaders who were themselves republicans. It has been established for only three generations, and its title to rule rested on the fact that its kings were the guardians of a democratic and liberal constitution. When a king of Italy breaks his oath, tears up the constitution and reigns for twenty years as the insignificant tool of a dictator, how much is left of this claim to legitimacy? Whether the people of Italy will, if they are ever free to exercise the right of self-determination—and this, Mr. Churchill said, requires "conditions of comparative tranquillity"—decide to retain the monarchy we do not know. What is certain is that only an insignificant fraction of them, the landed gentry who furnish its broken army with incompetent officers, will consent to retain Victor Emmanuel.

Apart from his sentimental veneration for monarchy, Mr. Churchill's support for this pitiable King is obviously based on his belief that the military services of this army—by which he means its officers—are worth a price. As things are, save for pioneer work, it seems worthless. On the other hand, we rate highly the services which Italian workers have already rendered in the more virile North. That they could have achieved much more, had we chosen to encourage them, we also believe. Our present policy is calculated, we might even say that it is designed, to discourage them. Guerillas are valued only in Yugoslavia. For this King, however legitimate he may be, the Italian masses will not fight, nor will they strike. The sentences with which Mr. Churchill concluded this passage said in effect that a democratic government, if it should be set up in Rome, is likely to prove a nuisance. That means, we take it, that Mr. Churchill, in close contact with the clerical and monarchist forces round Badoglio, will use his overwhelming influence to delay or prevent its establishment. This is neither honest politics nor is it sound strategy. What is worth winning in Italy, even from a narrow military standpoint, is not the officer caste but the men who have preserved, after twenty years of fascist corruption, the moral strength to fight for freedom.

In the concluding passage of his political review, Mr. Churchill threw away, more explicitly than ever before, the political weapon which might even now be used to break down German resistance. Hitler is now steeling his people to fight on to the last ditch. The trapped Eighth Army on the Dnieper was even incited, with some success, to suicide. A war waged in this spirit of militant despair for yet another year will leave behind it a Europe incapable of any early recovery. We know the cost in German lives, but how many milllons of Russians will be sacrificed in the process? Until the leaders of the United Nations can bring themselves to say, not in vague phrases but in concrete terms, that a future awaits the German people which it need not contemplate with despair, the Nazis will be able to prolong the struggle to the last heroic act of a catastrophic tragedy.

In so far as it purported to give Parliament an account of military operations during the past six months, Mr. Churchill's speech contained some curious silences and left various enigmas unexplained. He made no reference to the ill-conceived and unhappy adventure in the Dodecanese islands; nor did he elucidate the reasons for Allied inaction in the Balkans generally. As for Italy, we had found ourselves "committed" to a frontal advance (in country whose unpropitious nature for an offensive must surely have been foreseen). "Difficulties" (unspecified) in the way of an amphibious turning movement had been overcome at the Carthage conference at Christmas, and the "virtually unopposed" landing of large forces at Anzio had been the result. What followed, however, had not been "as planned." Planned by whom—the local commander, the Mediterranean C.-in-C., or the Prime Minister? Mr. Churchill refrained from elaborating his cryptic statement, the implication of which is either that some commander failed to carry out his instructions or that different conceptions existed of the nature of the objective. However that may be, a lightning stroke against Rome was not attempted; but we have at least the satisfaction of having compelled the enemy to increase to a strength of 18 divisions the force opposing us south of the city. Responsibility for ordering "stricter censorship of alarmist phraseology" in correspondents' despatches was shouldered by the Prime Minister without apology—an attitude hardly calculated to allay the wrath of the newspapermen. They have addressed to the Prime Minister a vigorous protest complaining that their errors, if any, were due to erroneous guidance from official spokesmen.

Yugoslav Loyalties

While Mr. Churchill has recognised that our allies must be those who fight the enemy and has therefore given his backing to Tito and discarded Mihailovitch, he has left the position of King Peter obscure. The British Government, he said "would not dissociate themselves in any way from the king." Does that mean that Peter is to be put in cold storage until a more favourable moment comes and a fairly presentable government can be found for him? That gives point to last week's broadcast by General Simovitch, the figurehead of the 1941 palace revolution. He is suddenly brought out of retirement to make a carefully ambiguous speech. He praises the liberation armies and attacks "traitors"—the intended conclusion being that he backs Tito's government and repudiates the Puritch group in Cairo. But the general is connected with an attempt to collect a "non-partisan" military group together which would maintain itself apart from Tito while giving him rather vague support. Shall we find that one day in the near future Mr. Puritch has been quietly dropped and that Peter has a new set of advisers who are not so completely isolated and discredited?

Poland's Last Chance?

Mr. Churchill's endorsement of Russia's claim to the Curzon Line disposes of one issue; but relations between the Polish émigré Government and Moscow are still indefinite. If it is true that the Polish Government has at last instructed its underground army to co-operate with the advancing Soviet forces, one of the major obstacles to a resumption of diplomatic relations has been removed. But have the Poles delayed too long? Reports suggest that the Soviet attitude has stiffened. The Union of Polish Patriots has become even more bitter in its denunciations of the "émigré Fascist clique"; it has now included new people on its executive until it looks remarkably like a rival Government; and at the same time it claims that a National Liberation Committee—looking to Moscow rather than London for leadership—has been set up in Poland. On the other hand, correspondence between Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin suggests that the door is not quite closed. No doubt, if it is to be shut, Stalin would prefer that the responsibility rested with Mr. Mikolajcyk's Government. The Polish attitude, unfortunately, has increased the difficulties. Disagreement within the Government diminishes the chance of a compromise. Last week Mr. Mikolajcyk offered his resignation to the President on the grounds that the pressure of the more extreme nationalist and anti-Soviet sections of his Government made his position impossible. It was refused, the President having secured from the four main parties a pledge of support for the Premier. But the deadlock remains. Without a reconstruction of the Cabinet—a solution the Poles are reluctant to seek after the Russian demand for it—they seem unlikely even to reach agreement amongst themselves. So their answer merely appears to be a further display of foolish obstinacy.

Is it Planning at Last?

The *Sunday Times*, in what looked like an officially inspired news paragraph, stated last Sunday that the question of the post-war location of industry has now reached the "ministerial level," and that plans are being made to influence industries to settle in areas in which there seems likely to be too little employment or an undue concentration on a limited group of industries exceptionally liable to cyclical depression. It is also said that Government departments have been in negotiation with big firms about the taking over of surplus war factories, and that decisions on this and other questions are likely to be reached quite soon. It is high time. Neither the reconstruction of war-damaged areas nor the planning of house-building schemes, nor the development of transport services and power and water supply (in which last the Minister of Health has promised a White Paper) can be dealt with properly except in relation to the planning of industry. What we want to know is, whether the Government now at last proposes to tackle this problem on comprehensive lines, in relation to the proposals of the Scott and Uthwatt Reports as well as the Barlow Report, or is meaning merely to try and arrange by negotiation with a few big firms for the conversion of some of the war factories in specially threatened areas, without any element of general economic planning or control of location over the country as a whole. The past record of the Board of Trade, which gave evidence before the Barlow Commission strongly against control of any sort, gives small ground for hope, unless Mr. Dalton has been signally successful in dealing with his "permanents."

The Miner's Wage

The miners have accepted, under strong protest, the Government's refusal to allow any extension of the conclusions of the Porter award to cover adjustments of wages for men who are earning more than the minimum rates laid down in the award itself; and they will now proceed to discuss with the owners that general revision of the wage-structure of the coal industry which the Porter Tribunal recommended as overdue. It is indeed overdue—by at least twenty years; for the wage structure of the coal industry has been in an utter muddle ever since the last war, if not even longer. It is full of anomalies and complications. On the one hand there are pit lists of prices, fixed separately for each pit, sometimes with and sometimes without machinery for adjusting them when they are plainly too high or too low in relation to what is paid in other pits. On the other hand, there are percentage advances, or standards of various dates; and there are also varying subsistence wages and minimum wages of several kinds, determined separately in the different coalfields. There are many astonishing differences in total remuneration between pit and pit, even in the same area. Admittedly, coal-mining is a difficult industry, from the standpoint of wage determination, because the conditions of coal-getting vary so widely from place to place. But that only emphasises the point that the revision of the existing wage-structure is bound to be an exceeding prolonged and complicated affair. If the miners are to wait for any redress of their grievances until such a revision has been carried through under divided private ownership of the mines, they look like having to wait a very long time. Possibly that is the idea.

Patents

A most interesting controversy over the patent system is at present going on in the business world, with I.C.I. and Boots Pure Drug Company as the protagonists. Mr. Sugden of Boots is arguing for, and Mr. Bingen of I.C.I. against, the system of compulsory "licences of right"—that is, the right of any manufacturer to apply for a licence to use any patent by paying an appropriate royalty to its owner. The existing Patent Law does provide for such licences in special cases, e.g. where it can be shown that a patent is being held deliberately out of use. But the procedure is exceedingly expensive, and recourse to it is beyond the means of all save the largest firms. In effect, it does not work. It has therefore been possible for I.G. Farben and other big foreign firms, in agreement with I.C.I., to register patents in this country in such a way as to prevent any British manufacturer from producing certain kinds of chemical and other products; and it has been a deliberate German policy to make the fullest possible use of this aspect of British patent law. This is a scandal, which clearly must not be allowed to go on after the war. There is all too much evidence that the pre-war agreements between I.C.I., I.G. Farben, and Duponts acted restrictively, to the disadvantage of the consuming public throughout the world.

PARLIAMENT: Panorama

Wednesday evening.

FROM domestic minutiae the House soared on Tuesday to contemplation of the vast and murky pageant of Europe. The Prime Minister's speech was longer than had been expected, and by no means perfunctory at any point; it consisted of two main parts—the account of military operations, and the political survey of Europe—and a postscript, the doubtless irresistible dig at the "little folk"—such as Mrs. Corbett Ashby?—"who frolic alongside the Juggernaut car of war, to see what fun or notoriety they can extract from the proceedings." The first part of the speech was almost wearisomely drawn-out. Members hoped that the extraordinary emphasis on air power and the value of the British contribution was to be taken at face value, or was, at any rate, a double-bluff at the expense of the enemy rather than an alibi for the second front.

Arthur Greenwood, whom everybody likes, had his usual unthankful task of starting the debate off as the House trooped out to lunch. "War," he said, "is bound to make difficulties." Sir Archibald Southby, a sea-dog whose eloquent bluffness conceals a certain astuteness, was the first of many Members to murmur against Soviet policies or practice; of Yugoslavia he said, "Let us beware . . . of endeavouring to install or boost a Government of the Left or Right at the expense of the other"—meaning, no doubt, let us beware of installing a Government of the Left. Mr. Teeling (Brighton) delivered his maiden speech competently, in the attitude of the Medicean Venus; he said he had travelled a lot, and foreigners all wanted a government like ours, but not yet.

Tinker, a pawky, kindly *ventre-à-terre* Labour Member, suddenly opined that "historical places, however well famed they may be, come second where human lives are concerned"; he explained that it had been irritating in the last war to have to skirt Jerusalem without destroying it. He said he wanted fair play for Russia *and* Poland. Captain Graham, who followed, clearly wanted fair play for Poland, anyway; he said that he feared "pitiless, bloody class-war," and that Churchill's estimate of Tito's supporters was less accurate than the more modest one that he had obtained from Yugoslav Government sources.

Austin Hopkinson made one of his strange, sincere, crabbed speeches: at one moment the Tories were cheering him; at the next—when he made the startling statement that, by our bombing policy, we had "put him [the enemy] and those youngsters of his on the right side, and put those youngsters of ours on the wrong side"—they shouted "No" and "Shocking." It was an uncomfortable uprush of the guilt felt by many Members.

As Pickthorn himself said, he spoke "far too long." None the less, it was a speech that few who heard it would have missed; in this debate Members on all sides agreed that the speeches of which they disapproved were at a high level of debating interest. Pickthorn wrapped up academically, with an infinity of donnish mock-diffidences, McGovern's statement that

Churchill was "Stalin's Charlie McCarthy." Gallacher said that this speech was "cunning, unscrupulous, and immoral." Vyvyan Adams said that he did not "intend to emulate the cascades of eloquent indignation that dropped" from Gallacher.

On the second day, George Grey, a Liberal Guardee Adonis, spoke admirably, pointing out that the tungsten in the projectiles which shattered his tanks came from our ally Portugal, the chrome that tempered the armour-plate of enemy tanks from our ally Turkey. Morris of Salford, just back from Burma, insisted amid some heckling that ordinary soldiers didn't care about post-war plans and merely wanted to get back to everything as it was before, including slums. Strauss (Lambeth) rebuked him with some dignity. Boothby denounced thunderously the "paralysis on the home front" and the mistimed bombing of Milan after Mussolini's collapse. "Prudence in war," he quoted from Fisher, "is imbecility." He was one of comparatively few speakers who did not take a nervously moral pro-Polish line: "I come back to power," he said, "from which honourable Members flinch." Belisha, speaking of American excursions in the Middle East, spoke weightily of "the biological urge that drives all countries forward." Aneurin Bevan: "Biological urge! Standard Oil." Eden, winding up rather thinly, made the expected "strong" but friendly statement about Spain.

At question-time Dick Law had some trouble about the "accidental mis-sorting" of some English letters in Spain; they had, surprisingly, been sent to Germany. He gave an assurance of "any action that is open to us."

Tail-piece :—

Mr. McGovern: . . . action against a country the Ambassador for which, Matsuoka, was kissed on the cheeks by Stalin before he went back to Japan—.

Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University): Where did the hon. Member expect him to be kissed?

PONTIFEX MINOR.

AFTER MONTE CASSINO

THE bombing of the Benedictine Monastery on Monte Cassino is an event which may mark a turning point in the pattern of our national conduct. The thing has been done; as we face the ruins, we shall react to the precedent in one of two ways. The first deliberate destruction of a famous cultural monument was not easy: we hesitated before we did it for ten days. When once our scruples have been overcome, shall we be prompter and more ruthless on future occasions, of which there will be many? Or shall we listen to the regrets of civilised minds and take the resolve to make sure of the necessity before we repeat this act of vandalism? It was a wretched evasion of the real issue for Lord Simon in the Lords to argue that the loss mattered comparatively little because the building was "modern." The crypt is ancient and so is the traditional cell of St. Benedict. The church itself is a fine baroque building of the 17th century with notable carvings and paintings of the same date: that is to say it is as "modern" as St. Paul's. It does not rank with the greatest achievements of Italian architecture, but it had associations which made it unique in the history of Christian civilisation. From this cradle radiated the creative and conserving influences of the Benedictine Order, the first guardian of culture in the darker period of the Middle Ages. Here, too, was its library, rich in priceless manuscripts. Not all of these treasures had been removed. The ruin of this place carries its symbolical warning to us, as we perfect ourselves in the arts of destruction.

Was this act necessary? It is the general belief that the Germans had fortified the monastery and stationed their guns in it or on it. Statements to this effect were made with confidence by our propaganda and as stoutly denied by the Germans. There is no dispute that German batteries were in position on the slopes below the building and that it was guarded by German sentries who had, as usual, machine guns of one sort or another. The central fact to bear in mind is that some two thousand Italian refugees had taken shelter in the monastery itself. Had the Germans planted their guns in the building, or fired from it, these witnesses would of course have known of it. Our military authorities, when they made up their minds to bomb the abbey, very properly warned the refugees of their peril by firing leaflets at it. Now the significant fact is that this leaflet did not mention the grounds which would have been the only adequate justification for bombing the building. Here is the text, as given in the *Times*—

> Italian friends, beware: we have until now been especially careful to avoid shelling Monte Cassino monastery. The Germans know how to benefit from this. But now fighting has swept closer and closer to its sacred precincts.
>
> The time has come when we must train our guns on the monastery itself. We give you warning that you may save yourselves. We warn you urgently: Leave it at once. Respect this warning. It is for your benefit.—Fifth Army.

Would the officer who drafted this appeal have used only a vague phrase meaning anything or nothing if he had been sure that the Germans were actually using the abbey as a gun-emplacement? He knew that the refugees knew the facts and therefore he was cautious. A narrative from some of them was printed in last Sunday's *Observer*. They do not spare the Germans. They are justly indignant because the German sentries turned them back when they tried to escape. But they said nothing to corroborate the suspicion on which we acted. It is easy to understand the state of mind of our troops. They were in a tight place. They knew that this enemy has no scruples. In such conditions rumours and suspicions find ready currency. It is possible also that some of the Americans were irritated by the scruples of the British, whom they are apt to regard as conventional and conservative. In short, we have grave doubts whether there is evidence of any "overwhelming military necessity" which could justify this act of destruction.

In such a case, what is the proper course to adopt? The Germans flatly denied our accusation. Before we again reject their denials, ought we not to invite neutral observers to testify to the facts? There are, for instance, in Rome Swedish and Swiss officers attached to the legations of these neutral States, who could be invited to form a Commission of Inquiry. On condition that the Germans gave them full facilities, they could report whether Rome is in a state that satisfies the definition of an open city under international law. It is a proof of good will that we have our own archæologists on the spot, directed by Sir Leonard Woolley. But that is not enough. It is indispensable that neutrals should be called in with a watching brief, men whom both sides can trust to be vigilant, impartial and truthful. An approach should be made at once to the Swiss or the Swedes or to both of them with a request that they should undertake this duty. In our slow and painful advance we are now entering country where every stone is history. Unless some plan can be reached which both sides will respect, we may between us end by ruining some of the noblest heirlooms of mankind. If in the fury of battle we destroy Rome, Florence and Assisi, the generations to come will curse us as barbarians.

MEDICAL MOSAIC

NO one, says the Government in its White Paper on *A National Health Service*, "must have reason to believe that he can obtain more skilled treatment by obtaining it privately than by seeking it within the new service"—a service which, in all its essential branches, is to be free to all. These are brave words; but how likely is it that they can come true under a scheme which leaves the right to private practice intact, preserves the voluntary hospitals, and, in the Government's own words, rests on the assumption that there is not to be "any compulsion into the service, either for the patient or the doctor"? Or, rather, even if in general those who attend the general public free of direct charge are as "skilled" as those who attend the remaining private patients, will they give the same amount of attention? Will patients who prefer to go to the paying wards which the voluntary hospitals are to be allowed to maintain be treated just like patients in the ordinary wards? Will all doctors treat rich old ladies who pay them well and poor old women who directly pay them nothing exactly alike? In short, will class distinctions be obliterated from the single realm of medicine, while they continue in full bloom everywhere else?

Of course they will not; and neither the writers nor the readers of the White Paper will for one moment expect any such thing. But most readers will not be disposed to condemn the White Paper merely because it puts forward an absurd and disingenuous claim. Short of the full equality of treatment which is unobtainable in a community riddled with class distinctions from top to bottom, there is room for great improvements; and no one who has studied the White Paper will be in any doubt that the adoption of its proposals would be a considerable advance—if the plan is carried out in full, and not whittled away in the course of the negotiations which are to follow upon its issue. That they will not, however, be carried out in full for some time to come is admitted in the White Paper itself. There are not nearly enough dentists to make possible an effective dental service for everybody; and it is proposed to limit immediate action to certain priority classes. There are similar difficulties in connection with eye services; and the approach to the provision of Health Centres is intended to be very tentative in the early stages.

The main issues that arose when the proposals were discussed with the local authorities and the doctors turned on questions of administration, with the financial issues looming always in the background. The doctors and the local authorities took widely different views about the control; and both groups wanted to know how much, and in what form, they were to be paid. The White Paper tackles all these questions, though it does not answer them all, even tentatively. On the administrative side it is reasonably clear. Hospital and consultant services in a pretty wide sense are to be run by Joint Boards, representing combinations of local authorities—i.e., on a basis of indirect election. Other medical services, which can be effectively organised in smaller units than are necessary for the hospital and related services, are to be run by the Counties and the County Boroughs, to the exclusion of the smaller local authorities. But the general practitioners engaged in the "family doctor" service—which is the pivot of the whole plan—are to be employed under contract, not with the local authorities, but with a Central Medical Board which is to be attached to the Ministry of Health, and is to work under the general direction of the Minister. This solution is proposed in order to turn aside the wrath of the doctors who object to being made servants of the local authorities, and will be able to reckon on a larger measure of professional autonomy if they are employed by a largely professional body which will be able to take a somewhat independent line in dealing, not only with the local authorities, but also with the Minister himself.

This is quite an ingenious way of getting round the professional pride of the recalcitrant doctors. But what will it mean in practice? The White Paper leaves entirely open the question how far the doctors under the new service are to become salary-earners or are to continue to be remunerated by fees, and even the question how many of them are to retain private practice side by side with their public work. It is pointed out that, whether the doctors are to be paid salaries or capitation fees on the lines of those now paid under the Health Insurance Scheme, it will be necessary for the State, after discussion with the profession, to arrive at a notion of the total income which is to be regarded as appropriate for a general practitioner or for a consultant, and to base either salaries, full-time or part-time, or capitation fees on whatever standards are decided upon. The doctor who enters the scheme will have to accept some limitation in the number of patients admitted to his list; and the number will have to be smaller for those who are also doing other work than for those who are giving whole-time service. Special problems will arise in the assessment of higher incomes for consultants and others possessing special qualification or bearing special responsibilities; and, in effect, whatever the *method* of payment may be, the State is bound to assume the task of deciding how much, broadly, each class of medical practitioner is to be paid.

This being unavoidable, it would be very much better to go the whole way, and convert the entire profession, as far as it works for the State service, into a body of salary-earners. But a large section among the doctors is hotly opposed to this, and somewhat irrationally regards a capitation fee as more "professional" than a salary; and the Government has clearly done its best to avoid offending medical prejudices. Therefore, the extent to which a State medical service is to emerge from the new plan is left simply undecided. It will be open to the new authorities to adopt either salaries or capitation fees, or any mixture of the two systems. Presumably the salary method will make some advance, especially in the consultant services and in areas where Health Centres, based on group practice, are set up. But none can tell from the White Paper how rapid or how extreme the advance towards a salaried State medical service is likely to be. It is left for the State, the local authorities and the doctors to argue this out in the discussions which are still to come.

From the standpoint of the local authorities, one critical question is that of the distribution of the financial burdens involved in the scheme. It is not easy to predict these with any accuracy: there are many uncertain factors, including the rates at which the doctors are to be paid. Tentatively, the White Paper puts the total annual cost falling on public funds at £132 millions for England and Wales, and estimates that £48 millions of this will have to be borne by the local authorities. This compares with about £40 millions—the sum spent by the local authorities in 1938–39 on the existing health services to be absorbed into the new plan. Of course, some of this £48 millions would in effect be paid for out of national funds, through the block grants payable under the Local Government Act of 1929; but this does not affect the point that the ratepayers would be called upon to meet an additional bill of approximately £8 millions (plus another £1 million in Scotland, where the scheme is somewhat different from what is proposed for England and Wales). These sums may not seem to be very large; but they have to be considered in connection with the additional charges placed on the ratepayers by the Education Bill, and in the light of the grim and inescapable fact that the entire system of local rates has already broken down in many areas, and is likely to break down in many more. If additional burdens are to be placed on the local authorities, many of them will strongly resist all avoidable expenditure under the scheme; and such non-compulsory points of it as the projected Health Centres will not stand much chance of realisation in the poorer areas, where they are needed most.

One important element in the plan is its declared intention to put as much as possible on the family doctor, and proportionately little upon special services, except the hospital and consultant services to which the family doctor is to refer his patients in case of need. It is, for example, proposed that the school medical service should provide only inspection, and not treatment; and it seems to be assumed that there will be no considerable development of factory medical services. This might be all very well, if it could be taken for granted that Health Centres would be provided all over the country, not merely one or two to a town, but in large numbers, so as to serve quite small areas. But what prospect of this is there, if such Centres are to be left as a matter for local experiment and initiative, and are not to be insisted upon as an integral part of the plan? It is not, indeed, suggested that the treatment side of the school medical service can be thrown over at once; but the effect is to discourage its further growth, without any provision of a satisfactory alternative.

Finally, there is the question of the voluntary hospitals, which are to be subsidised and kept in existence under the scheme. It seems to be assumed that the vast numbers of persons who now subscribe regularly to voluntary hospital funds in order to secure service will go on doing this when they have become entitled to the same service as of right, whether they subscribe or not. But why should they? And are doctors expected to go on working for nothing for the voluntary hospitals when a large part of their private practice has disappeared? Intent as the Government plainly is on preserving the voluntary hospitals, it seems most unlikely that they can long remain, under the new conditions, voluntary in anything but name. It would be infinitely better to integrate them fully at once with the municipal hospitals in a single service. The only reason for not doing so appears to be that they represent a powerful vested interest—or perhaps vested prejudice would be a better name. The other great vested prejudice is that of the private practitioner; and with both these giants the Government is evidently determined not to attempt a fall.

ANGLO-DUTCH UNION

[The author of this challenging article is a Dutch engineer who settled in England in 1937 and is now engaged in the production of munitions for the Allied cause.]

THE Government of the Netherlands, which in May, 1940, found shelter and recognition in Great Britain, was an ineffective Government, which had endeavoured, and failed, to preserve its balance on the lucrative tightrope of neutrality. It arrived in England, hall-marked by the authority of Queen Wilhelmina; but on its arrival its moral collapse was complete. Numerous high-ranking officers came straight from Holland (under circumstances which after the war will have to be closely examined), while small bands of gallant men fought their way through Belgium and France and were lucky to gain the coast and transportation to England. Moreover, there was the usual stream of civilian refugees. All were completely stunned and overwhelmed by the violent events taking place around them. The only person who held her head erect with royal dignity, with faith in the future and confidence in her new-found hosts and protectors, was the Queen herself. Princess Juliana, with her children, was shipped off to Canada, to safeguard the dynasty; her husband Prince Bernhard proceeded to indulge in his mania for speed cars, while the British people prepared to resist invasion.

The ramshackle Dutch Government set itself up in London, called up its subjects for service, tried to levy taxes, voted its members a substantial salary increase, and started to enjoy the amenities of British hospitality. The first Prime Minister of this émigré administration deserted his Queen and the Allied cause by escaping to Holland at the first opportunity. He was replaced by a fanatical Calvinistic Professor of Law, Gerbrandy, as head of a lightweight team of careerist politicians and Civil Servants. Gerbrandy's Cabinet was recognised and is still regarded by the British Government as representative of the Netherlands, and all the Dutch people stand for to-day. The truth is that it no more represents Holland than the Chamberlain administration represented the guts and endurance of the British people.

The months passed: conditions in Holland became severe. Seyss Inquart, the German Governor, having tried—without success—the velvet glove, soon revealed the iron hand. Holland's reaction was vehement; an underground movement was born, and from the tales brought by the many brave men and women who had to flee to England, it became abundantly clear that out of the tears and bloodshed a new Holland was born. It was a renaissance comparable to Britain's, though the circumstances and motives were different. For once, Holland was guided not by the old neutrality-addicted politicians, but by an active group of people of all classes and creeds, with two aims in life—the destruction of the oppressors and the rebuilding of a new Netherlands in which the émigré Government certainly has no place.

Ever since it was formed, Gerbrandy's Government has planned a military dictatorship for Holland upon its return. A clique of Dutch professional officers, reactionary to a degree, admirers of Nazi philosophy (see Leonard Moseley's *Parachutes Over Holland*) persuaded the Queen to act as saleswoman for their proposal to establish a "state of siege" as a first stage. This, said the Queen on the radio, would provide for "the removal of all undesirable elements"—a term which might include anybody, especially as the "state of siege" is to be administered by the "military authority," which in Holland is a very different thing from the British conception. The greatest fear of these Dutch officers is that the British authorities, with their "absurd liberalism," may interfere with their proposed purge. Its justification? The argument is that the Dutch underground movement is "infiltrated with communism." Obviously, as in all underground movements, the Communists play a leading part in Dutch resistance. They have the necessary experience of underground organisation and cell-forming. But after the ejection of German troops from Holland, the Communists would cease to be of great importance, as the job would then become one of reconstruction rather than sabotage; their influence would be diminished to their (quite small) numerical proportions. Communist infiltration gives no excuse for a "state of siege." Its imposition (I have the testimony of many non-Communist underground fighters arrived from Holland) would result in a rising by all who to-day are actively aiding the Cause.

Now Britain, in that event, could do one of three things. (1) British troops might be used to quell the rising by force in the interests of Dutch reaction. This would be a bitter blow to Dutch patriots who have looked for four anxious years towards Britain for their liberation. (2) Alternatively, it might be decided to let the Dutch fight it out amongst themselves. This surely could not be in Britain's interest. After years of Nazi tyranny, civil war would reduce Holland to anarchy and demoralisation. (3) British military occupational forces might take over the administration of Holland until proper elections could be held.

The last is the only course which merits adoption. British troops are generally popular in occupied countries, and would be much liked in Holland. But a British military occupation could be no more than a temporary solution. Apart altogether from Dutch feelings in the matter, the British Army expects to be demobilised, after hostilities, with no more delay than is essential. There must, therefore, be a long-term plan for Holland to follow an immediate " preventive " occupation by British forces. Now on November 25, 1943, that staunch friend of Great Britain, Dutch-born General Smuts, made a speech before the Empire Parliamentary Association, in which he gave his audience the following explosive matter " to consider and ponder " :—

> Should we not cease as Great Britain to be an island? Should we not work intimately together with those small democracies in Western Europe which by themselves may be lost, as they are lost to-day, and as they may be lost again? . . . They have learned their lesson that standing by themselves on the Continent . . . they are lost. Surely they must feel that their place is with . . . Great Britain . . .
>
> We have evolved a system in the Commonwealth which opens the door for developments of this kind. To-day in the Commonwealth we have a group of sovereign states working together, living together in peace and in war under a system that has stood the greatest strain to which any nation could be subjected. They are all sovereign states, they retain all the attributes, functions and symbols of sovereignty. Other neighbouring nations, therefore, living the same way of life and with the same outlook, can with perfect safety say " That is our group; why are we not there? With full retention and maintenance of our sovereign status, we choose that grand company for our future in this dangerous world." It is naturally a question for the States of Western Europe to settle for themselves. It is for them to say whether . . . they should not help themselves by helping to create out of closer union with Great Britain a great European State, great not only in its world-wide ramifications, great not only as an empire and a Commonwealth stretching all over the continents, but great as a power on this Continent, an equal partner with the other Colossi in the leadership of the nations.

Was this unique invitation extended with the approval of the British Government? Maybe it was. It came more easily from Smuts than from a British statesman. But if we regard Smuts' suggestion as harmonising with the views of the Empire, we should probably not be far wrong. And though the invitation extended to all small democracies in the West of Europe, Holland can be termed the most natural aspirant for membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations, since its interests are closely interwoven with those of the Empire. Geographically, Britain's Far Eastern possessions link up with the Netherlands East Indies. Holland's small West Indian possessions are intermingled with British islands. Commercially, to all intents and purposes, our large commercial undertakings (Royal-Dutch-Shell, Unilever and rubber interests) are jointly owned. Historically, the destinies of both nations run on parallel lines of colonial aspirations. Both are seafaring nations. We Dutch would not come empty-handed and could contribute our experience, from which the Empire would derive great benefits, in the fields of colonial administration and international commerce. Holland, in turn, would benefit greatly, apart from military security, by association with Britain in the art of government, practical liberalism, finance and law.

After Smuts had spoken, the Dutch Government spokesman, Foreign Minister Van Kleffens, went in front of the microphone and, in a speech to Holland, pooh-poohed the whole idea, planting the seeds of doubt as to Britain's military strength after the war—a point on which he can rest assured. There are difficulties to overcome; one is the position of the Royal House. But they amount to nothing that Great Britain, with its flair for compromise in consultation with the other Empire members, cannot settle. Shortly there will be a meeting of the Grand Council of the British Empire, attended by all the Dominion Premiers. What a golden opportunity to enlarge upon General Smuts' conception of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a living organism, capable of growth. As for Holland's attitude, ultimately the people to decide the issue are those who are fighting to-day at Britain's side on land, on sea and in the air, and along the dark dikes of the Low Country, with murder in their hearts, and a hope for a new, happy, peacefully secure Holland in their souls.

W. van Leer

UNITED PROGRESSIVE FRONT

In Mrs. Corbett Ashby's Committee Room at Bury St. Edmunds is a large poster with the words " Support the United Progressive Front." It is a curious thing that in this to-all-appearances politically paralysed town, the United Progressive Front has advanced to a stage reached nowhere else in the country. Partly it is because there has been a tendency to ever-closer and wider co-operation from Darwen to Skipton, from Skipton to West Derby, and now from West Derby to Bury, but it is also partly because a little group of local men, believing it to give the only hope of breaking the Tory stranglehold, have been working for it.

The story begins eighteen months ago, when Lt. Reiss, son of Captain Reiss, of Welwyn Garden City, who has fought a number of elections for Labour, happened to be stationed in Bury. He found himself in a political vacuum. After the 1929 election, when the Conservative polled 16,462 votes to the Liberal 11,344 and the Labour 2,490, the Liberal Party had gently faded out. Labour kept up some show of activity until the outbreak of war, but then that, too, ceased. The immensely powerful Tory machine was in undisputed control.

In search of kindred spirits, Lt. Reiss wrote to the Fabian Society and was put in touch with Oliver Powell, a tall, lean, red-cheeked farmer of forty-four with a reflective turn of mind. "I sometimes wonder," he said to me, *àpropos* the shortage of "muck," "whether the world can go on ticking round while so much human excrement is thrown into the sea."

A local branch of the Fabian Society was formed, and two more personalities appeared—Hugh Arkwright, a little, baldish, evacuated schoolmaster of fifty-one, who used to do unobtrusive work in Labour Committee Rooms in Hampstead, and F. D. Crowe, an alert former farmer of forty, who became the secretary.

Lt. Reiss was soon moved on, but the membership of the Society swelled to forty and regular meetings were held. They discussed the Tory machine and decided the only way of beating it was to get all the progressive forces together. Last summer they called a meeting which was attended by representatives of the Labour, Liberal, Communist and Co-operative Parties and seven trade unions.

This was the three-point motion they discussed:

(*a*) *We recognise the paramount necessity of co-operation to ensure that the constituency shall be represented by a Member progressive in thought and action;*

(*b*) *We will work together to increase the membership of progressive societies and trade unions within the constituency;*

(*c*) *We will give active support in a Parliamentary election to a candidate approved by a two-thirds majority of a standing committee consisting of two delegates from each society subscribing to the programme.*

Some criticism came from the Labour organiser and the Communist, but it was agreed the delegates would consult their parent bodies. Partly because of Labour opposition, the standing committee was never set up, but when Mrs. Corbett Ashby came to seek help for the sudden by-election there was the nucleus of the United Progressive Front in which she also ardently believes.

Mrs. Corbett Ashby has now the full support of the Common Wealth and Communist Parties, the open support of officials of the Liberal and Co-operative Parties and the Fabian Society, and of a Conservative alderman who believes in Beveridge, and the covert support of Labour men.

The constituency, 385 square miles in extent, had in 1939 an electorate of 41,000, nearly 12,000 of it in Bury, a market town with many small tradesmen, a brewery, an agricultural machinery works and a sugar factory. The only other large centre of population is Newmarket, to the south-west, with 6,700 voters, a solid Conservative lump attached to the rest of the division by an isthmus, for some distance only the width of the road—almost as if it had been tied on specially to ensure that Bury should be a safe Tory seat. The rest of the division consists of villages and farms and the great feudal estates of such men as the Marquis of Bristol, the Duke of Grafton, the Earl of Iveagh, and Sir John Agnew, Bt., while in the North it runs into the thinly populated fen country and a new afforestation area.

The United Progressive Front is working it like this. The nearest Common Wealth branch is at Stowmarket, just outside the eastern boundary, and they have made themselves responsible for a strip about five miles wide running the length of the eastern side. Newmarket is being tackled by a joint team of Communists and Common Wealth, under a Liberal organiser, and with some help from supporters in Cambridge.

The rest of the division is worked from Bury. The agent is a Liberal, the meetings secretary a Communist, and one of the chief organisers Common Wealth. The Fabians are constantly in and out of the committee rooms.

Whether the election is won or lost, the Fabians and many of the other local people have decided to set up a permanent United Progressive Front divisional organisation. It may be the first in the country, but they think other constituencies will follow and that eventually the national desire for unity to turn the Tories out will spread from the country to the national headquarters of the parties and trade unions. Mrs. Corbett Ashby believes it would be possible to work out a common programme for a two-, three- or four-year plan.

She also believes that the time to start the fight is now. She wants the Liberal Party to withdraw from the election truce, and sees quite clearly that this may mean withdrawing from the Coalition. Her candidature here, like that of Miss Honor Balfour at Darwen, is part of a drive by a section within the Liberal executive to convince the party that voters are waiting for such a lead.

Prospects in the by-election are doubtful. Though Progressive Unity is almost complete, it will be necessary not only to get the whole Progressive vote, but also a part of the former Conservative vote. They have against them the stables at Newmarket, the farmers, the landlords and the strong and efficient Tory machine under a relentless Party Boss, Major E. L. D. Lake, brewer, mayor, chairman of the divisional Conservative Association. But the machine has of late years ruled so dictatorially that there is considerable opposition to Major Lake in Bury itself—the defection of Alderman Olle is an example.

Mrs. Corbett Ashby has printed in capital letters on her election address, "The Ballot is Secret," but fear is playing a depressingly large part for an English election—in the Labour Party fear of Transport House, in Bury fear of the influences which a dominant party caucus can bring to bear in a small town, in the country fear of the overlords. Mrs. Corbett Ashby should have a majority in Bury, but probably not in Newmarket, and the issue may well depend on the extent to which the Common Wealth shock troops, fresh from their triumph at West Derby, can influence the agricultural workers in the short time at their disposal before polling on Tuesday.

It occurs to me that I have not mentioned the Conservative candidate, Major E. M. Keatinge. He is not an important figure in the contest, but he seems a decent sort of chap. He is thirty-nine, was in the school fifteen, and running eight at Rugby, is a serving officer, a local farmer and a fluent speaker, with an attractive young wife who has been nursing. But he would have to be a much stronger personality than he is for the people of Bury to regard him as anything more than the recipient of Mr. Churchill's letters and the representative of Major Lake.

Wanderer

A LONDON DIARY

The Conservative Party, the Labour Party, Mr. Churchill (except in his capacity as war leader) and the popular Tory press have all been soundly beaten in the last two by-elections. The victor in both has been the independent electorate. Mr. Churchill tells people that they can't support him as leader in the war and weaken him as head of the Tory Party; they reply that they can, and proceed to do so. When Labour leaders tell their followers to vote for the Cavendish candidate, they put their fingers to their noses. They are unimpressed when Captain Waterhouse, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, naively suggests that Goebbels is watching them. The right to vote against a ducal Tory is one of the rights they maintain against Goebbels. In Kirkcaldy the electorate is so far contemptuous of the party truce and the orders of Transport House that the Labour majority in an industrial seat is drastically reduced in favour of a Scottish Nationalist. The astute blend of vilification and ridicule adopted by papers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* failed to come off. The popular press is mainly read for entertainment. It is often influential about foreign affairs because so few of its readers know enough about them to be able to check its misleading simplifications, and in an election it may succeed in turning a tendency into a landslide, as it did by the Red Letter in 1924 and the inflation scare in 1931. But when the issue is about anything that the public understands, it usually votes against the papers it most readily reads. In 1906 the Liberals won an overwhelming majority against a Tory press. The Labour Party was built in spite of the national press. The same thing has happened recently with the new Socialist victories in Canada and Australia. Mr. Roosevelt has to beat the press every time he stands for President.

That is the first lesson from West Derbyshire and Kirkcaldy. The electors do not see why they should put back into Parliament the same kind of people who have been there ever since 1935, and the effect of being told by Mr. Churchill or Transport House or the press that it is naughty to take an independent line is to make them rally round and vote for candidates who do not stand for the old orthodoxies. As the wife of a village labourer remarked when she heard the result on Saturday: "Well, if the Government told me how I'd got to vote I would have to vote for the other man, wouldn't I?"

* * *

Mr. Greenwood's talk about having to get under one of two party umbrellas doesn't meet the case at all. He has been in politics long enough to know that the Labour Party cannot win a Parliamentary majority entirely in the industrial areas or by the Trade Union vote. As things stand to-day there are many seats where Common Wealth may turn the scale in favour of a candidate who would not win if he stood for Labour alone. Liberals still have a real following in many agricultural constituencies and Labour has neglected the agricultural areas. The Liberals have now chosen as their chairman Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, one of the best speakers in England and a remarkably level and clear-headed politician. Common Wealth has tried to avoid being driven into opposition to Labour, and I could mention constituencies where the local Labour people who have asked Common Wealth speakers what their attitude would be to the present Labour candidates in the case of a General Election, have been gratified to learn that Common Wealth would do all it could to support their candidates. Common Wealth's campaigning technique has been successful in convincing electorates that their leaders wanted not power for themselves but the success of the progressive cause. The organisation they take to constituencies consists of six or eight persons, not of a hundred, as Lord Hartington suggested. One result of their energetic intervention has been to produce a record poll. I am amused to see that the Communists, who fiercely denounced Common Wealth for its Fascist tendencies only a few months ago, have suggested a unity conference between Labour, Liberals, Common Wealth and the Communists. The idea is correct, but obviously the invitation must come from another quarter. It should come from Transport House. A special Labour Executive is meeting this week-end with the Labour Ministers in attendance, to discuss the question of future policy. I hope it will take a generous and intelligent view about co-operation with other groups. But if Transport House do not take the initiative for creating a common programme and a joint electoral arrangement, then the initiative must come from people who have not lost the capacity to think seriously about politics.

* * *

The deep repugnance so many of us feel to the policy of obliteration bombing has been well expressed once more by the Bishop of Chichester, Austin Hopkinson, and one or two others. The strategy of this war has turned on the belief of Cherwell and Churchill that Germany could be bombed into submission and the consequent concentration on the production of bombers at the expense of other means of war. But what is the logic of a protest against area bombing—as opposed of course to precision bombing on military targets? That it is another step downwards unto the abyss of purely mechanical slaughter, finally erasing the line between civilians and military, destroying both good and evil, the noble and the ugly, the innocent and the guilty, the Fascist and the anti-Fascist, all in one mindless holocaust.

* * *

For the first time since 1941 I happened to hear Haw-Haw on the wireless the other night. He had the same edge on his voice; its "nastiness" is, I am quite sure, enough to make most British listeners disbelieve what he says. He made some good propaganda points about Italy, and then he proceeded to describe the panic and breakdown which recent German raids were supposed to have produced in London. The effect was quite ludicrous. I had just left an entirely normal London after one of these great raids. Why do the Germans think it worth while to tell us this poppycock? As propaganda inside Germany it is intelligible enough. A raid of some sort, admitted by the British and reported by neutrals, enables Goebbels to placate public opinion. But the only effect on Londoners of being told that they are in a state of panic, living in Undergrounds and queueing up for soup kitchens is to make them laugh. I think the probable explanation is that Haw-Haw and his colleagues themselves believe what they are told to say about these raids. After all, propaganda is better done by people who believe their own nonsense than by people with their tongue in their cheek.

* * *

Years will pass before we have material fully to judge Allied policy in Italy before and after the fall of Mussolini. Much the fullest account yet published appears in a book called *Towards a New Italy*, by T. L. Gardini (Lindsay Drummond, 9*s.* 6*d.*). In a preface to this book H. G. Wells rightly claims it as strong support of Left attacks on Allied policy in Italy. Mr. Gardini gives a detailed and daily record of events; here is proof much of the credit for upsetting Mussolini must be given to the opposition parties—which we were always told were too weak to count. These parties were producing a broadsheet the very day after his fall. Yet after "a three days' honeymoon" they were again repressed by Allied policy and the Badoglio Government. Mr. Gardini's book, which is well documented, should be carefully studied and kept by one for reference. The question he cannot answer, of course, is whether Allied policy would have been wise to support a democratic revolution throughout Italy at a time when the Allies had not apparently the means to maintain the forces of democracy in towns like Turin and Milan against the certain counter-attack of the German armies. When I hear this issue debated by people who know the inside story I realise that the issue is more difficult than democratic supporters admit, but I should be much more impressed with the arguments of the other side if there had been signs that the Allies had accepted the Badoglio Government with reluctance and had ever really desired an Italian anti-Fascist revolution. As always in these matters there is a technical case against doing what the authorities don't want. What Mr. Gardini's book makes clear is the strength of the opposition in Italy and the importance of putting our trust in the popular forces. When the Allied armies reach Germany there will very likely be a similar choice. There too we may find a far more lively opposition to the Fascist Government than people now expect; once more I suppose we shall be told that there are technical reasons against encouraging it.

* * *

Trinity has at last made restitution to Bertrand Russell; he has been reinstated as a Fellow and it is expected that he will come back to reside in Cambridge. Not long ago Professor Hardy, the mathematician, published for private circulation an account of how Russell was deprived of his Fellowship during the last war, and I think many who were in that mood of intolerance then will have read Hardy's account with a sense of shame. Bertrand Russell's stay in America has not been altogether happy. He found jobs at the wrong institutions. Who would have expected Voltaire to be comfortable at a Methodist college or to have given pleasure to the authorities there?

* * *

Talk with people from America has convinced me that the Presidential Election of 1944 is a major disaster equivalent to the fall of France! "No one," as an Englishman characteristically remarked to me, "has his eye on the ball." Who will win the Cup? The argument is simple. Dewey can't beat Roosevelt. Only a national figure, that is Willkie, has a chance against the reigning President. But Willkie can't, they say, as it were, win the Republican nomination. Therefore, through no fault of his own, Mr. Roosevelt (with a profoundly reactionary Congress) will again be President.

* * *

A famous scientist sends me the following comment on England's transformation since Waterloo.

Lord Hartington
Didn't go to Dartington
He lost his seat on
The playing fields of Eton.

Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. F. Kornhaber.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Later School-Leaving Age Likely to Limit Supply of New Jockeys.—Headline in *Evening Standard.*

"The probable reason my husband wanted his sons to marry red-haired, blue-eyed girls was because he had a great love for everything British and wanted to keep the Empire together. He liked the true British stock represented by the original Britons, and the true English girls of that time were mostly red-haired and blue-eyed."—Interview in *Evening News.*

"This election is the best bit of fun since the murder seven years ago," a Derbyshire man said to-day.—*Evening Standard.*

For transport purposes, pacifist land workers come under the same category as Italian prisoners, farm livestock and sacks of potatoes.—*West Essex Gazette.*

IGNORANT AND PROUD OF IT

I READ the other day yet another reference by a man of science to the boastful propensities of those of us who know little science. He maintained, as so many scientists do, that we are proud of our ignorance. I have never believed that this is true. I am as ignorant as most men who have forgotten half what they learned at school, but I take no pride in not knowing how many miles the sun is distant from the earth or how to produce electricity by flogging a piece of glass with the skin of a cat. Facts of this kind are a foreign country of which I do not know the language. Even if I am told them again and again I forget them within a week, so that I could not explain to a child of twelve why dew falls (if it does fall) or why the weather is warmer in summer (now and then) than in winter, or what happens inside a motor car when you press your foot on the self-starter. But I should feel humble, not proud, if a grandchild examined me on such subjects—as humble as if I were asked to name the capital of Patagonia (if it has a capital).

Few people, I am sure, feel boastful of their inability to answer questions. At school I had rather a sense of humiliation at being unable to tell my classical master the date of the Battle of Cannae (if there was such a battle) or what the Christian name of the mother of the Gracchi was, or on what date in which month the Ides and the Kalends fell. Knowledge of such things involved preparation, and I did not admire myself—under the severe eye of a classical master—for having omitted to prepare. I was relieved when the class was over and I was no longer embarrassed by third-degree attempts to plumb the depths of my ignorance.

All through life, I think, our attitude to the man who knows more than ourselves is one of envy. How one used to long, as one gazed at the ships in a harbour, to know as much as one's friend who could tell one the difference between a brig and a brigantine, or what a poop was and what a spinnaker-boom! If one went to the country, again, and was shown a collection of birds' eggs, how inferior one felt in not being able to say which was the egg of a robin and which of a hedge-sparrow, or to distinguish between the egg of a partridge and that of a sparrow-hawk! Every addition to one's knowledge made one an inch happier. The very hens in the farmyard, as one got to know them, added to one's pride in learning things; and no classical attainments can ever have given more pleasure than the power to identify the various families of fowls—the Leghorn, the Dorking, the Spanish, the Brahmaputra, the Cochin China, the Game birds and the Bantams. I do not know what good such knowledge does to a non-poultry-keeper. But to be able to name things gives us a sense of intimacy with them—perhaps of power over them—something that produces the pride and pleasure of knowledge.

We experience this pleasure as we look at the ducks in Kew Gardens, if we are able to distinguish the mallard from the pochard, the shoveller from the what-do-you-call-it, and the other one from the other one. Life in spring becomes doubly cheerful if we know enough about birds to associate every sound we hear from the air, trees and hedges with a name—hedge-sparrow, blackcap, willow-wren, white-throat, thrush. or tree-creeper. In theory the music of a bird ought to be equally delightful if we did not know its name, but in fact it is not. Nor are flowers as beautiful as they might be while they remain anonymous. A wild rose without a name would not seem as sweet. Nor would speedwell or chicory.

At school when I was a child we were taught none of these things. We learned many things, including the names of the wives of the kings of England, but we left school as ignorant of birds, trees and flowers as of the history and myths of our countryside. We knew more about quadratic equations than about cormorants and kittiwakes, and Romulus was a clearer figure in our imaginations than Cuchullain or Owen Roe O'Neill. I am not complaining of the education of those days, but obviously it sent us out into the world panoplied in ignorance of many things in the life and landscape that surrounded us.

I cannot, I may say, imagine any system of education which will not send children into the scrimmage of life in a state of what publicists would call multilateral ignorance. In previous generations, a man was thought to be dangerously ignorant if he did not know a considerable amount about the contents of the Bible. I wonder how many of the younger generation to-day know even that Samson was a teetotaller and that he called the place where he slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass Ramathlehi. If modernists have their way, most of the biblical and classical allusions in literature will soon become unintelligible. Whether ignorance of such things is worse than ignorance of spark-plugs and crankshafts I do not know. What is useful knowledge to one generation seems useless to the next.

The plain fact is, of course, that knowledge is useful only to those who can make use of it. Ovid was obviously useful to Shakespeare, and the Old Testament to Milton, but to a boy in a garage it is more useful to know about clutches and tyre-pressure. Some people urge us to acquire knowledge for its own sake, but unless knowledge is useful to us or is associated with pleasure it has a way of slipping from our memories. Most of the facts poured into our heads are poured into a sieve. You can see this by a study of any collection of howlers or any report of the result of intelligence tests. Many schoolboy howlers are, I am sure, deliberate—bright-eyed attempts to pull the legs of schoolmasters; but many of them show simply that a fact had become faint with time in the schoolboy's memory. Thus the boy who wrote: "Chesterton committed suicide at Bristol. He was only nineteen, and very thin and hungry," had a vague memory of what he had learned about Chatterton in the English Literature class, but the thing that he had been taught had never struck a light in his imagination, and his knowledge faded into an association of sounds. The same is true of the boy who wrote: "The people in Iceland are called Equinoxes." It is nearly right, but a miss is as bad as several miles.

Ignorance among the very young does not surprise us, but, in spite of our own adult ignorance, we are constantly astonished by the ignorance of those who are grown up and who ought to know better. Some years ago an Australian professor held an examination in general knowledge among his students, and discovered that few of them had ever even heard of Kerensky. One of them described Freud as an instigator of Arabian-British riots in Egypt. Freud was said by others to be the Norwegian leader of an Arctic expedition and a German banker. Quite recently it was reported that of seven thousand University freshmen examined in America nearly two thousand were ignorant of the fact that Abraham Lincoln was President during the Civil War, and most of them knew as little about Thomas Jefferson as the ordinary Englishman does. It is not to be wondered at, then, that judges and magistrates continually ask such questions as "Who is Flossie So-and-so?" and "What is a xylophone?" Judges are not always so ignorant as they pretend to be, but I can imagine that many judges find it as hard to keep up with the names of the latest film-stars as I do. It is only a month or two since I could have asked in genuine ignorance: "Who is Bob Hope?" Of that I was slightly ashamed.

There are some kinds of ignorance, however, of which it would be absurd to be ashamed. How many even of the wisest men in the world, for example, could answer the question: "What were the first words that Edison shouted into his first phonograph to see if it worked?" The answer—so I have read—is "Mary had a little lamb." But I doubt whether half a dozen professors in England could have answered that question, or would think it worth being able to answer. Equally unnecessary is it to know the answers to such questions as: "Why is King Christian of Denmark Colonel-in-Chief of the Buffs?" or "What is a umiak?"

It is questionable, indeed, how far the knowledge of a vast number of unrelated facts is desirable. There is a character in *The Wrong Box* whose conversation consists of a mass of unrelated facts, with the result that people find it impossible to sit in his company for long without being bored to the verge of madness. Perhaps even sciences in isolation from other sciences—the science of a vivisector, for example, who is ignorant of the A B C of the science of ethics—are not an unmixed blessing either to the world or to those who are masters of them. Still, on the whole it is better to know things than not to know them, even if, in many cases, it makes us no wiser. If some of us laugh rather tolerantly at our ignorance, we laugh at our own expense, not at the expense of those who know better. Self-mockery is one of the compensations of the ignoramus. Relativity does not seem funny to us so much as we ourselves seem funny for not being able to understand it.

Man did not begin to laugh at himself till he had eaten the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and discovered that after all he did not even possess much knowledge of good and evil. It is knowledge—especially half knowledge—not ignorance, as a rule, that makes men proud and boastful. I should feel boastful myself if I knew what the stars are made of, how to measure the vitamins in a carrot or the liver of a halibut, or why cats always fall on their feet and have nine lives.

Y. Y.

LONDON SHOWS

SCULPTURE is the art in which the English have been least successful, and it would be difficult to discover any continuous or characteristic English sculptural tradition. There is vigorous archaic carving, indeed, but apart from some pottery figures, almost all our later sculpture is either commonplace or foreign, the work of immigrants like Roubiliac or of men steeped, like Stevens, in a Continental tradition. Even to-day the sculptor best known to the public, Mr. Epstein, uses a strenuously emotional and emphatic style the virtues of which are exotic. He is still rich in the vehemence of his native New York. Mr. Frank Dobson, on the other hand, who is now exhibiting at the Leicester Galleries, is unmistakably, though unaggressively, English in his weaknesses as well as in his virtues—and this, though like all good contemporary artists, he confesses in his work a debt to France. Sometimes one feels in his sculpture a lack of urgency or passion, but never anything histrionic, never an attempt to express more violent emotion than he has felt. Consequently, even when there is a touch of *gaucherie* in his work, it never lacks solidity and candour. He is happiest, I think, when he indulges a taste for elegance. The large terra-cotta group is one of the most flawless things he has done, whereas the front of his marble "Awakening" is less happy than its back, because less sensitive. The small figurines are all thoughtful and harmonious, and the little groups in the two corners of the room reveal his power of filling a space. These can be specially recommended to the attention of architects. Now that there is no current idiom of ornament, the value of good sculpture on buildings is greater than ever; and Mr. Dobson's undramatic style is peculiarly well suited to embellish the severity of a contemporary building. The water-colours in the same show are of English scenes, but the dazzling blue that Mr. Dobson uses so freely suggests the artist's nostalgia for the Mediterranean, where the sun gives to sculpture varying and violent shadows.

Also at the Leicester Galleries are paintings by Robin and Fay Pearce. Both have talent, but their courage too often lands them in slapdash. Mrs. Pearce is the surer of the two, especially in the colour of her Still Lives. (Her big portrait-group does not hold together.) Mr. Pearce likes subjects in which exact placing is essential, and his placing is not usually exact. But he can produce sumptuous colour, and when he and Mrs. Pearce overcome the temptation to turn out poster-like paintings, they may take their place among our most gifted painters.

The Berkeley Gallery is showing some drawings and drypoints by a Polish artist, Katerina Wilczynski, who is sensitive and accomplished. Her illustrations for *Daphnis and Chloe* make a charming album. Her excellent drawings of Rome are a positively painful reminder of the architectural masterpieces now in danger, masterpieces less important, it seems, than the ugly buildings that all of those who fire-watch must risk their lives to preserve.

At Burlington House there is a show called "Colour in Everyday Life," arranged by a body called the British Colour Council. This appears to be a merely commercial organisation—at least its board includes the name of no artist known to me—but who can know the name of every English artist? The rooms held up to us as models are commonplace and "refaned" in colour; the fabrics selected do not represent our more inventive designers. Judged as art, this exhibition excites no interest. Judged commercially it is very little better than the old British Industries Fairs. The notion that we can command foreign markets with such devitalised products seems a little optimistic. They lack all *chic*. May I suggest to the British Colour Council that they procure advice from some of the artists, decorators and dressmakers who have shown an understanding of colour? The names of Duncan Grant, Frances Hodgkins, Matthew Smith, Graham Sutherland, Allan Walton and Captain Molyneux would occur at once to any well-informed person.

ROGER MARVELL

THE MOVIES

"Circonstances Atténuantes," at Studio One.
"Naples is a Battlefield," M.O.I. film.

Revivals provide me with a good half of the pleasure I get from cinemas in a year. The heyday of French films prevails, bringing back the baker's wife, the lottery ticket, the murder in the sidings, and for me there could not be a more agreeable return. I visited Studio One this week knowing that somewhere and at some time I had seen *Circonstances Attémuantes* before, but unable for the moment to place it. A catchy song with many verses preluded the division of the curtains—"bien entendu . . . . bien entendu . . . . "—a concertina leapt and squeaked, and I remembered everything. Michel Simon, of course, on holiday from the bench and enjoying life in a shady café on the outskirts of Paris. He and his wife, watched by a villainous gang of thieves, gulp down the Beaujolais, gobble up the garlicky rabbit, follow one *petit verre* with another, and before very long they are singing "Bien entendu" like everyone else. They get on so well that their car, which has broken down, is packed off for a complete overhaul so as to leave them free for innocent, clandestine pleasure. Soon he is pretending to lead the way in petty thefts, and stages a burglary of the more hideous objects in his own house. Everything in this film is light-hearted, from the view of the cemetery across the road to the pimping and bracelet-snatching fraternity who, in a wonderful conversion at the finish, take to honest toil. Such affectionate high jinks, attached to domestic humours, the retiring age and a café like a thousand others, are peculiarly French; we don't encourage even Mr. Asquith to similar explorations here. *Circonstances Atténuantes* isn't, I suppose, in the first flight of comedy, but I have enjoyed it a second time, and in a couple of years I shall be ready to see it again. Apologies to those whose memories don't need jogging. The next attraction at Studio One is to be *Le Jour S'Elève*, the last Duvivier film made in France, and the Academy, not so many doors away, shows signs of coming to life again.

This month's M.O.I. production is a documentary of Naples made by the R.A.F. and Army Film Units. The Allied tanks roll into Naples to find a starving people without services and often without homes, clamouring for a loaf of bread, drawing for water from the sewers. Supplies, gangs of workers, engineers start life going; and there is an effective sequence of the booby-trap city, cleared of its inhabitants, when the electricity is turned on. Possibly Naples was in a worse way than even this film reveals; supplies have to be kept up and they go, of course, largely to the Army, but typhus (according to the latest news) has been checked. *Naples is a Battlefield* will give audiences some idea, at any rate, of what is happening to the civilian population of Italy.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Sweeter and Lower," at the Ambassadors.

One Hermione (the Gingold) provides the inspiration for as good a revue as London has seen for many months. Here she is, as Hamlet, gossiping at a table in the Ivy, hard pressed by a guardee of the last war, giving thanks to the Yanks of this one, lecturing us as a matron, languishing, trilling, fanning the flame wherever it may be. She is continuously and wildly funny; a creation (look at her dresses!) that couldn't be improved on. To hear her and see her, to Straussian melodies, trilling "Vienna Steaks" is an experience that should outlive most memories of wartime London. *Sweeter and Lower* is gay, witty, and Anglo-American, above the average: an American soldier with a Duchess at the pantomime is a really funny variant of a worn theme. Mr. Henry Kendall lavishly provides the Duchess, and at other moments he simulates a facetious husband, a ballet favourite, and the Statue of Liberty. Lively performances, too, from Bonar Colleano and Edna Wood.

The concert of Russian music at the Wigmore Hall, reviewed last week by Mr. Sackville West, was arranged by the Society for Cultural Relations with U.S.S.R. and not, as stated, by C.E.M.A.

WELLS OF ARABY

["You will remember that the Atlantic Charter touched upon the question of equal access to raw materials in the post-war world."—Robert Waithman in article on AMERICAN OIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST—(*News Chronicle*, February 18th).]

WE have no territorial ambition,
We fight to bring an evil to an end,
We fight to raise the common man's condition,
We stand as fighting friend with fighting friend,
We do not bargain for post-war position
Partaking of the love-feast of lease-lend;
No land we covet and no State despoil,
But we must have our share-out of the oil.

The issue of the war is now decided,
Though grim and testing trials lie in wait,
And mankind's destiny, to us confided,
Will be blue-printed at some future date,
But how supplies of oil shall be divided,
On this we do not dare procrastinate,
Nor can we relegate to other hands
Our interests in oil-bearing lands.

We have hurled back the forces of aggression
We have set free Arabia's open spaces,
And by no weight of arms, but by concession
We peacefully exploit the oil bases,
Confirmed in overlordship and possession
By Arab kinglets in their calm oases,
As Power presiding in the Middle East,
Where palms rise up, and every palm is greased.

Our prior claim is due to the exertion
Of our Imperial vision and foresight,
Protected by our mandate Anglo-Persian,
The Shah of Persia wields his sovereign might,
Therefore we question Ibn Saud's conversion
Into a Standard Oil satellite
While State Department oil is poured upon
The troubled waters of the Lebanon.

Agreed on ideological abstractions,
Reiterated at each Conference,
We cannot lightly pass encircling actions
In our established zones of influence,
Nor can our bonds, in Allied oil transactions,
Affect our bargaining and business sense,
Joint victory our friendship will not cool—
Our hearts are one; our oil we cannot pool.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

A LETTER TO A SOLDIER

SIR,—Mr. Kingsley Martin's Letter to a Soldier is excellent, but there are two improvements which might be made.

(*a*) In the first paragraph, Mr. Martin asks why it should be suggested that the process of killing a few million people, etc., should make the world any better. This is true, but it is a fact all the same that the war provides an opportunity for reform. It wakes us from our lethargy and jerks us out of our grooves. Because we will not make reforms in peacetime we have to do so in war. Unfortunately war also gives many people a better time than they have in peace. Because of its more equal distribution of incomes, resulting from the taxing and borrowing of the rich and their payment to the poor as wages, so in spite of the shortages and restrictions of war, many people have employment and better wages than they would have in peace. This is a serious reflection on our civilisation. Probably the young soldier feels something of this but cannot put it into words.

(*b*) In his last paragraph Mr. Martin says if the Allies quarrel we shall quickly be back to a worse war. As he has used the bulk of his letter in showing the reasons the Allies have for quarrelling, this is rather a vain hope. It is like saying there would be peace in the jungle if the animals would agree together.

What Mr. Martin should say is if the Allies, or some of them, or even only one of them, would remove the causes of quarrels by getting rid of their predatory imperialism and monopoly capitalism, then there might be a chance of avoiding another worse war. If Germany should go socialist after the war, and if Russia should have the sense to let bygones be bygones and make friends with her, then the two socialist States would be invincible and no future wars need arise. Or even if France went socialist, or say the Poles and the Czechs went socialist, that might be enough to secure us from future war. But if none do then the future war is certain.

I do not say if Britain went socialist, because there is no chance of that. We have neither the leaders nor the guides to help us to socialism. Our Socialists seem to think they have only to wait until capitalism collapses, as foretold by Marx, and they can then bring in socialism leisurely in their own good time. But what sort of collapse of capitalism do they expect? If two world wars in twenty-five years is not a collapse of capitalism, what would be so? Do they think the world can live without any system at all while they get their socialism ready? Or do they expect the Fascists and monopolies to take charge in their own default?

Everyone seems to think they have plenty of time, but it is not so. The collapse of capitalism is occurring now, but our Socialists and Labour leaders are not ready for it. Perhaps the two world wars are not enough to get them out of their grooves. Perhaps Marx was right when he suggested that we must first be beaten in war before we shall be able to get rid of our incumbrances. If so, then the prospect for the young soldier is not so good.

SCRAM

ART AND BOMBING

SIR,—Even to face up to the problem of destroying works of art in the interests of military "necessity" requires appalling intellectual honesty and even more appalling emotional detachment. It isn't really a question of human lives versus "art." To say, in effect, "Here, on the one hand, are a thousand young men in the prime of life; and here, on the other, is the vault of the Sistine Chapel. Now choose!" is nonsense. They have to be young men of the Allied nations. A thousand young Germans won't weigh in the scales. Nor would young men of the past.

Historians of the twenty-first century won't see the problem as we see it, complicated by weeping mothers, stricken widows and orphaned children. "Those young men had to die some time. They died forty years too soon, and the Sistine Chapel was saved." To us that sounds indecently heartless, but the historian of to-morrow would surely think the sacrifice not only noble but sensible.

The real question is what *is* worth dying for ? Quite a lot of things, evidently, in the average man's view, or we should not be at war. Freedom, for instance. "Here, on the one hand, is the creeping shadow of slavery : and here, on the other, is a reasonable expectation of long life for your son, husband, father. Now choose ! " The Government has chosen and I, for one, approve its choice, though I think I understand the attitude of those who don't.

But even freedom isn't an end in itself. " Freedom for what ? " is the next question, and the ultimate answer is, " To live fully," and, if one is an artist, the freedom to create symbols of that fullness and pass them on to others. Certain artists have done that so potently that they have given life a new meaning and provided posterity not merely with a new set of experiences but with a new capacity for experience. Destroy those symbols of man's inner life—the only kind of life that counts—and you have lowered the spiritual standard of living for the whole of posterity.

It may be worth it, but only on one condition. If, in laying down our present lives for our future freedom, we destroy the symbols of past freedom, then it must surely be because we intend to use the freedom for which we have shed our blood to create more symbols. It may prove impossible to sacrifice lives for art because we have not the necessary emotional detachment, but at least we should make up our minds to sacrifice art not just for lives, but for the art of the future. The highest manifestations of the human spirit of the past can only be thrown away if you are determined to foster equally high manifestations in the future. And by high manifestations I do not mean a bath and a refrigerator for every family.

In the meantime enlightened letters to the press cut very little ice. I think I would be prepared to perish in an attempt to save certain of these astonishing symbols, though my courage might fail me, as Peter's did, when the moment came. But it isn't a question of personal creeds. It's a question of a national creed. Posterity will judge us by our willingness to state it now and our courage to act on it with reasonable conviction when the time comes. There is no need to make quixotic resolutions. Each case must be judged on its own merits. But posterity will think kindlier of us if we admit at once that every case has *some* merits and that a handful of Italian cases have overwhelming merits.

After all, we have decided that the motor-car is worth dying for. It takes its annual toll of thousands in the interests of a material standard of living, yet no one proposes to abolish it. Personally I would rather offer human sacrifice to art than to speed.

ERIC NEWTON

GERMAN EXILES

SIR,—In this country there are many educated German refugees willing to assist in the re-education of Nazi prisoners as suggested by Mrs. Jane Richardson. Nobody is more suitable to teach these soldiers that they have been misled by their Führer and his fellow-gangsters, that they have caused immeasurable misery all over the world and—last not least—to report about so many noble and philanthropic acts which we, Hitler's first victims, have experienced from the overwhelming part of the British people. But there is, unfortunately, a thick veil of hate governing the minds of even decent people, quite understandable after so many acts of barbarity and whilst the guns are firing, but nevertheless senseless and dangerous. Those who desire to " wipe out " the 70 millions of Germans are more popular than those who, like myself, owing to our lifelong knowledge of their mentality, regard the majority as misled sheep ; we know that Hitler's success was made possible by great mistakes of the peacemakers in 1919, and consequently by revolution, inflation, poverty, misery and—most of all—by unemployment.

Mrs. Richardson's letter proves the kindness and magnanimity of British women, but it discloses a deplorable ignorance about our position in this country. Our younger people—men and women—are in the Forces, proudly and willingly wearing the King's uniform and doing a good job, a great lot are on war work, grey-haired people doing manual labour, we are allowed to do firewatching and Home Guard duties (under certain conditions), we are quite fairly treated by the authorities, but we are not permitted to assist in warfare by our brains. We are even excluded from the magnificent task of U.N.R.R.A., i.e. rescue and rehabilitation of Europe. Resolution No. 37 of that international body says in respect of staff: "no discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, nationality or creed," but in fact up to now jobs are open only to members of the United Nations, we are still " enemy aliens." I cannot understand this discrimination, and I believe the majority of the British people do not either.

I do hope Parliament and public opinion may remove that deplorable ban, thus enabling us to collaborate in the great work ahead : rescue and rehabilitation.

M. R.

DERBYSHIRE ELECTION

SIR,—I write to you from an officers' mess that is eagerly awaiting the nine o'clock news and the result of the West Derbyshire election. The interest is great, perhaps greater than for any other general event since Italy was invaded. The mess, which so very rarely hears a word of political conversation, has echoed with arguments as to who is going to win and by how much.

Yet the effect of all this I find profoundly depressing. The new Government health plans which occupy the greater part of to-day's papers are ignored, just as was the Education Bill earlier. The pleas for Monte Cassino, the utterances of Chichester and Lord Lang cause complete contempt if ever they are mentioned at all. And the election itself is *never once considered politically*. The sensational discuss it as once they talked of the Dionne Quins and the latest murder : the sporting lay bets on it as once they did on a Derby of a different nature. Goodhall and Madame Palateewa cause three times as much interest as the main protagonists. Osbert Lancaster exactly summed it up in his cartoon of the ringmaster announcing the absence of the bearded lady and six slack-wire walkers owing to a previous engagement in West Derbyshire.

We are told that recent election interest proves that the people are awakening. Does it, I wonder. Or is it perhaps that elections, overpublicised by the press, are simply a new outlet for the sensational ? Whatever the result of the election, will there be any political significance in it at all ? Judged by present company, I doubt it.

GUNNER SUBALTERN

THE COST OF BALLY-HOO

SIR,—May I draw attention to one particularly regrettable aspect of the War Savings " dope propaganda," so nobly described last week, namely, its permeation of our schools.

Every informed person realises to-day that the problem of maintaining full production, either in war or peace, is not a money problem but a problem of " planning," i.e., organising the available human beings, raw materials, machinery and land in such a way as to produce the consumption goods, capital goods and services, which the community requires for the purposes of war or peace.

This truth is made crystal-clear, not only by the general war experience, but also by the economic development of the Soviet Union during the last 20 years. It is obvious that if the Government wanted us to become an informed democratic community, no boy or girl would be allowed to leave school without having been given an opportunity to understand these simple economic facts.

It may be that in the secondary schools there is some appreciation of the truth. But in the elementary schools, which educate the vast majority—80 per cent.—of the nation's children, almost the only practical teaching in the field of economics is em-

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JONATHAN CAPE

bodied in the periodic invasion of the schools by War Savings campaigns.

You condemn the War Savings organisation for using arguments, " whose fallacy should not deceive a child," in its efforts to persuade adults to invest their money. It seems to me even more undesirable to use the " dope propaganda " to deceive the children themselves.

R. St. John Reade

OTHER RANKS

Sir,—I wonder if you and your readers have noticed the series of pictorial advertisements now appearing in the daily press in aid of the " Salute the Soldier " campaign. If so, you and they may also have noticed (as have so many " Other Ranks ") how very different is the description beneath the picture of the Officer as compared with that of the " O.R."

The most glaring example is one such advertisement appearing a few days ago which depicted a Despatch Rider who, the caption states, sold newspapers before the war. He is honoured by being shown selling his wares on a street corner. The next in the series shows a Lieutenant leading troops into battle. Lieutenant Blank, it is stated, was a schoolmaster before the war. The next advertisement showed three "O.R's." and they were described as being respectively a baker, a bank clerk, "in one of them big banks ", and some other occupation of a similar nature.

One is apt to wonder why it is the public is asked to believe that Lieutenant Blank was a professional man in civil life and that the " O.R's." were " men of no importance " in their civil life. Is it fair to create the impression that because a man is now commissioned in the Army he held a correspondingly high position in civil life and that the ranker was unable to do so? In fact that the " O.R." was, in addition, a man of little education (vide the poem in the latter advertisement).

The " O.R's." battle to retain his pride is difficult enough without the publication of advertisements tending to belittle him. As it is he is viewed with considerable distrust by shopkeepers, hotel managers, and the like, and advertisements of this nature do not assist to dispel from the minds of the public their obvious doubts as to his integrity. It might be well gently to remind the public that a man is commissioned on account of his military prowess or technical qualifications and not on the grounds of his civil occupation.

Sergeant

SOLDIERS' PAY

Sir,—I am a soldier recently returned from the Mediterranean theatre, and I am still in an emergency hospital in this country. While my comrades and I were in Africa, then later in Italy, we had many grumbles and grievances, but none so bitter and so (it seemed to us) genuine as " pay." The hospital I am in now is a civilian one, and I have had many opportunities of speaking to civilians here, and I was amazed at the amount of money they say they receive ; but the bitterest pill of all was the amount they tell me they save.

Now I know this is an old grievance, and one which you fully appreciate, and I see that there is promise of further talk (at least) in Parliament. I see there is a widely advertised " Salute the Soldier " campaign—what the soldiers want is less saluting and more concrete evidence of the Government's appreciation. Please do what you can for us ; I'm not worrying about myself for I am lucky—at least I am in " Blighty "—but boys in Italy, Burma and elsewhere need your help. They are bearing the biggest burden—they get the least reward.

" Overseas "

NATURAL BEAUTY

Sir,—Mr. Sylvan Howell writes with imperfect knowledge. I was living and working at Devil's Bridge for four or five months in 1942, when I not only watched the swift progress of the felling and the thick smoke rising from the charcoal ovens, but frequently tramped along the tractor-paths on the now devastated side of the gorge opposite the falls of Mynach. The only name observable on the articles of equipment used by the timber-fellers and charcoal-burners was that of the Ministry of Supply. As for the ovens, I walked past them scores of times ; to get to them it is necessary to abandon carriage-roads and do a bit of rough scrambling.

It is stated by Mr. Howell that the Ministry agreed not to clear the timber from the top of the ravine on the opposite side, above the famous falls. I affirm that not only had its officials the evil design of so doing, but that they had denuded several acres of woodland there up to the time I left.

Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis can speak for himself. Even if the Timber Production Department had not been the offenders, surely he and his Council might have fulfilled their self-imposed task by attempting through publicity to prevent this rape of Rheidol by private profit-makers. He would have stronger support from organised ramblers if he could show himself less ineffectual in preventing such ravages, and if he refrained from making a charge to visitors who wish to see that stretch of coast he owns at Port Meirion.

Birmingham 13.

Jack Wood

MAN AND LITERATURE

Sir,—In his review of *Man and Literature*, Mr. Pritchett gives the impression that he is one of the group of modern intellectuals who adhere to the rationalism of the mid-19th century. His " He does believe we should struggle against the original ape " is a piece of Huxleyism of the purest water. The " traditional Christian feeling," he also remarks, is " the will-lessness of man." Since the freedom of the will has been the linchpin of Christian doctrine for two millenia, this is a surprising statement indeed. He goes on to contrast this fatalistic attitude with the " energy and moral struggle " of the liberal philosophy whose achievement was to " release the will in man and his creative forces." This liberal philosophy was inseparably allied with the doctrine of inevitable progress, as total a theory of determinism as the world has ever seen, optimistic in the average Victorian, pessimistic in Thomas Hardy. But one or the other the actual form it took was almost wholly materialistic and, being deterministic, denied the freedom of the will. The spiritual impotence and inertia of the Churches at the high tide of material progress cannot be denied, but to confuse these with Christian doctrine hardly qualified Mr. Pritchett to be so dogmatic in his view of the latter with which he plainly has little acquaintance

H. J. Massingham

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES

Sir,—Critic's references to *Interglossa* and *Basic English* express the subjective impression he derives from both systems. He says that " . . . assuro de pan Homini in pan Loco duro habe bio minus Phobo minus Nρ-pluto " can be translated by anyone and that he could learn to read in an hour or so, and to speak *Interglossa* with a few days' practice.

The approach to the problem of an auxiliary language will have to be scientifically founded. " What are the claims of the system proposed ? ", and "To what extent does the system conform to these claims " are questions which have to be answered before we can judge the merits of a particular system.

The claim that any system of auxiliary language can be learned within a few hours has brought discredit to Esperanto, Ido, Occidental, Novial, and Latino sine flexione. It would be truer to say that a well-elaborated system requires infinitely less effort on the part of the learner than a natural language, because it lacks irregularity if properly constructed. On closer examination it will be found that Basic English does not and cannot fulfil the functions of international scientific nomenclature, an essential part which no constructed language can ignore.

H. Jacob

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHEN lately I was reading *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, I felt extremely the want of some sort of guidance on the Victorian fascination with violent crime. What explains the exorbitant preoccupation with murder, above all? In earlier periods, when life was cheaper, rape, seduction, incest were the crimes favoured by literature. If we look to literature rather than to life, it is certain that Victorian writers took over murder from the popular taste of the 18th century, and succeeded—against the outcry of the older critics—in making it respectable. But in the 19th century one detects also the rise of a feeling (so curiously expressed by a popular writer on the melodrama a few years ago, I have forgotten his name) that "murder is cleaner than sex." There is a clue there, I think. There is a clue, too, in the fact that organised police forces and systems of detection were not established until the Napoleonic wars; and another more sinister clue lies in the relative freedom from war after 1815. A peaceful age was horrified and fascinated, for example, by the ritual murders of the Indian thugs. Where else can we look? To the megalomania that was a natural field for the Romantic movement? To the guilt that is deposited in the mind after a ruthless exertion of the will, such as the Victorians made at the time of the Industrial Revolution? To the social chaos before the '50's, when tens of thousands were uprooted and if they did not rise with the rising tide, were left to sink into the slums or to stand out alone in violent rebellion? The more one reads of the unrest and catastrophes of the 19th century, in social or in private life, the more one is appalled by the pressure which its revolution applied to human beings. And when we read again the rant of the melodramas, when we listen to the theatre organ of Bulwer-Lytton in *Eugene Aram*, and read the theatrical pages of Dickens, we feel, after the first shock of distaste, that these people are responding to a pressure which is not exerted upon us in the same degree. The violence of the scene suggests a hidden violence in the mind, and we begin to understand how assuaging it must have been, in novels like *Oliver Twist* or *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, to see the murderer's conscience displayed in terms of nightmare and hysteria.

Assuaging to the Victorians, but not to us. We are not driven by the same dynamo. *Edwin Drood* stands at the parting of the ways between the early Victorian and the modern attitude to murder in literature, and also, I suspect, at the beginnings of a change in Dickens himself. The earlier murders of Dickens belong to the more turbulent decades of the 19th century. By the late '50's a calm had been reached; the lid had been levered back on to the pot of society and its seething had become a prosperous simmer. When Wilkie Collins wrote *The Moonstone* and Dickens, not to be outdone, followed it with *Edwin Drood*, we begin the long career of murder for murder's sake, murder which illustrates nothing and is there only to stimulate our skill in detection and to distract us with mystery. The sense of guilt is so transformed that we do seek to expiate it vicariously on the stage; we turn upon the murderer and hunt him down. Presently, in our time, the hunt degenerates into the conundrum which, by a supreme irony, distracts us from our part in the mass murders of two wars. One or two critics have suggested that the struggle with the unfamiliar technique of the hunt was too much for Dickens and that it killed him and his novel. We cannot know whether this is so; but both those who dismiss the book as the last leaden effort of a worn-out man, and those who observe that it is the most careful and private of Dickens's novels, are agreed that it is pitched in a key he has never struck before.

What is that key? Before I add my answer to the dozens that have been made, it seems important to define one's own attitude to Dickens. I am totally out of sympathy with the hostile criticism of Dickens which has been made during the last 20 years, which has ignored his huge vitality and imaginative range and has done no more than to say he lacked taste and that he sacrificed a profound view of human nature to the sentimentalities and falsities of self-dramatisation. To me it is a perversion of criticism to suggest that you can have the virtues of a writer without his vices and the discovery of Dickens's failures does not make his achievement less. I swallow Dickens whole and put up with the indigestion. I confess I am not greatly interested in the literary criticism which tells me where he is good and where he is bad. I am glad to be instructed; but for us at the present time I think there is far more value in trying to appreciate the nature of his creative vitality and the experience that fed it—a vitality notably lacking in our own fiction. Now when we turn to *Edwin Drood* we do find some of the old Dickens. There is Mr. Sapsea, for example, with his own account of his courtship, that beautiful shot plum in the middle of romantic love and Victorian marriage:

> "Miss Brobity's Being, young man, was deeply imbued with homage to Mind. She revered Mind, when launched or, as I say, precipitated, on an extensive knowledge of the world. When I made my proposal, she did me the honour of being so overshadowed with a species of Awe, as to be able to articulate only the two words 'Oh Thou!' meaning myself. Her limpid blue eyes were fixed upon me, her semi-transparent hands were clasped together, pallor overspread her aquiline features, and, though encouraged to proceed, she never did proceed a word further. . . . She never did and never could find a phrase satisfactory to her perhaps—too—favourable estimate of my intellect. To the very last (feeble action of the liver) she addressed me in the same unfinished terms."

That is the old Dickens but a shadow is upon Mr. Sapsea. The tomb of Mrs. Sapsea is, we are told, to be used by Jasper, the murderer, for his own purpose. Durdles, the drunken verger, tapping the walls of the Cathedral for evidence of the "old uns," is to be roped in. The muscular Christian, Mr. Crisparkle, sparring before his mirror in the morning, is marked down by the plot; and that terrifying small boy, the Imp or Deputy, who is employed by Durdles to stone him homewards when he is drunk, will evidently be frog-marched into the witness box. Dickens is submitting to discipline and how fantastically severe it was may be seen in Edmund Wilson's pages on this novel in *The Wound and the Bow*. The background loses some of its fantasy, but the best things in *Edwin Drood* are the descriptions of the cathedral, the town and countryside of Rochester which are recorded with the attentive love one feels for things that are gracious and real. Chesterton thought that something of the mad, original Dickens was lost in this realism; other critics explain it as the influence of Mid-Victorian settling down. Mr. Edmund Wilson seems to suggest that in *Edwin Drood* one finds the mellowness and the bitterness of the man who sets out with some confidence equipped to master his devil and to dominate his wound. I do not find a loss in this picture of Cloisterham:

> Cloisterham is so bright and sunny in these summer days, that the cathedral and the monastery-ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them, rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot cornfields and the smoking roads that distantly wind among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit. Time was when travel-stained pilgrims rode in clattering parties through the city's welcome shades; time is when wayfarers, leading a gipsy life between haymaking time and harvest, and looking as if they were just made of the dust of the earth, so very dusty are they, lounge about on cool doorsteps, trying to mend their unmendable shoes, or giving them to the city kennels as a hopeless job, and seeking others in the bundles that they carry, along with their yet unused sickles swathed in bands of straw. At all the more public pumps there is much cooling of bare feet, together with much bubbling and gurgling of drinking with hand to spout on the part of these Bedouins; the Cloisterham police meanwhile looking askant from their beats with suspicion, and manifest impatience that the intruders should depart from within the civic bounds, and once more fry themselves on the simmering high roads.

The shocks in *Edwin Drood* come not from the sudden levelling of his fantasy and the appearance of realism. They occur when Dickens acts his realism—see the showdown between Jasper and Rosa—and we realise that it is really alien to Dickens's gift that his people should be made to talk to each other. He merely succeeds in making them talk at each other, like actors. His natural genius is for human soliloquy not human intercourse.

In criticism of the English novel and in appeals to what is called the English Tradition, there has been a misunderstanding, I think, about this intrinsic quality of Dickens. One hears the word Dickensian on all sides. One hears of Dickens's influence on the English novel on the one hand, and of the failure of the English novel to produce a comparable genius. While the word Dickensian lasts, the English novel will be suffocated. For the convivial and gregarious extravagance and the picaresque disorder which are supposedly Dickensian are not Dickens's especial contribution to the English novel. They are his inheritance from Sterne, Smollett and, on the sentimental side, from Richardson, an inheritance which may be traced back to the comedy of Jonson. What Dickens really contributed may be seen by a glance at the only novelists who have seriously developed his contribution—in Dostoevsky above all and, to a lesser degree, in Gogol. (There is more of Dickens, to my mind, in James Joyce's *Ulysses* than in books like *Kipps* or *Tono Bungay*.) For the distinguishing quality of Dickens's people is that they are solitaries. They are people caught living in a world of their own. They soliloquise in it. The pressure of society has created fits of twitching in mind and speech, and fantasies in the soul. It has been said that Dickens creates merely external caricatures, but Mr. Sapsea's musings on his "somewhat extensive knowledge" and Mr. Crisparkle's sparrings in front of his mirror are fragments of inner life. In how many of that famous congress of "characters"—Micawber, Barkis, Moddles, Jingle, Mrs. Gamp or Miss Twitterton: take them at random—and in how many of the straight personages, like Jasper and Neville Landless in *Edwin Drood*, are we chiefly made aware of the individual's obliviousness of any existence but his own. The whole of Dickens's emotional radicalism, his hatred of the utilitarians and philanthropists and all his attacks on institutions, are based on his strongest and fiercest sense: isolation. In every kind of way Dickens was isolated. Isolation was the foundation not only of his fantasy and his hysteria, but also—I am sure Mr. Edmund Wilson is correct here—of the twin strains of rebel and criminal in his nature. The solitariness of people is paralleled by the solitariness of things. Fog operates as a separate presence, houses quietly rot or boisterously prosper on their own. The veneer of the Veneerings becomes almost tangible, whipped up by the repetitions. Cloisterham believes itself more important than the world at large, the Law sports like some stale and dilapidated circus across human lives. Philanthropy attacks people like a humour or an observable germ. The people and the thugs of Dickens are all out of touch and out of hearing of each other, each conducting its own inner monologue, grandiloquent or dismaying. By this dissociation Dickens brings to us something of the fright of childhood, and the kind of realism employed in *Edwin Drood* reads like an attempt to reconstruct and co-ordinate his world, and to prepare to bear its burden by a confession of guilt. The vitality of Dickens comes from a recognition of the multitude of his disparate selves.

V. S. PRITCHETT

VIRGINIA WOOLF

A Haunted House and Other Short Stories. By VIRGINIA WOOLF. *Hogarth Press.* 7s. 6d.

"Desiring truth, awaiting it, laboriously distilling a few words, for ever desiring——" This half sentence from *Monday or Tuesday* is the key to Virginia Woolf's work. She was a very great artist, experimenting to the last, never satisfied that she had discovered the words, the rhythm, the form that could communicate the truth she sought. In pursuit of that truth she refused to survey her characters from without and draw them in clear outline, nor would she tell their story in the traditional way. Like Mrs. Dalloway,

> She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or that.

She knew, as Eleanor knew, that:

> These little snapshot pictures of people left much to be desired, these little surface pictures one made, like a fly crawling over a face and feeling, here's the nose, here's the brow,

for, as Bernard says:

> We are not simple as our friends would have us, to meet their needs.

Therefore, after her first two books, the characters are never described by the narrator but revealed by their thoughts, their words and the impact they make upon other human beings similarly drawn. Nor did the traditional story, with its ravelled and unravelled plot, seem to her an adequate pattern within which to contain her own vision of life. Such events as marriage and death are, for living beings, more often a part of the warp and woof of life than the solution of a problem. And time, which the intellect shapes as a measurable quantity, meted out in centuries to mankind and in hours, days and years to men, is not like that in our perception of its duration, which has little to do with the calendar or the clock. The truth that Virginia Woolf wove her words and her patterns to capture was the truth of human experience. No novelist has recorded more subtly and delicately the experience of love, of death, of joy in "an exquisite sense of the luxurious" and of sorrow at "the miseries of the world." She had that "negative capability" in which Keats discerned the hall-mark of the poet; therefore in her record of the human scene no judgments are announced and no conclusions are drawn. The words, the symbols, the rhythms and the intricate pattern of her novels record the criss-cross of human lives and the inner consciousness of individual men and women. No explicit comment is made upon human actions, but her sense of values, implicit in all she writes, is wise and penetrating. Three times at least her unceasing experiments with the form of the novel led to masterly achievement, in *To the Lighthouse*, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and in that little recognised masterpiece, *Between the Acts*.

In this volume Mr. Leonard Woolf has re-issued most of the stories which originally composed the volume called *Monday or Tuesday*, together with six that have appeared only in magazines and six which have never been printed before. For some readers the chief delight of this new volume will be to trace the relations between the stories and the novels. Virginia Woolf was not primarily a short-story writer. The full statement of her vision requires a larger canvas in which several lives can be interwoven and the past, including the historic past, can be seen reflected in the present. But in these tales, as in the sketches of a great painter, we can observe the characteristic method and the characteristic quality of perception Together they show her brilliant fantasy, her subtle sense of humour and, above all, her compassionate understanding of men and women. Two tales *The New Dress* and *The Man who Loved his Kind*, are outstanding in their insight and in their formal perfection. The latter is of peculiar interest for it handles, with far deeper insight, a problem treated in her first novel. It is a study of the active and the contemplative philanthropist, moving within the mind of each and revealing their mutual incomprehension. It is the counterpart of the scene between Rachel and Richard Dalloway in *The Voyage Out*, but there the active, complacent politician was presented satirically, whereas here both temperaments are sympathetically drawn.

But it must not be thought that *The Haunted House* has nothing to offer to a reader unacquainted with the novels. It is a volume of very distinguished short stories, and as such it will appeal to all discerning readers.

JOAN BENNETT

BABEL

The Loom of Language. By FREDERICK BODMER. Edited and arranged by Lancelot HOGBEN. *Allen and Unwin.* 15s.

Interglossa. By LANCELOT HOGBEN. *Penguin Books.* 9d.

The sub-title of Dr. Bodmer's book is "A Guide to Foreign Languages for the Home Student," and of Professor Hogben's "A Draft of an Auxiliary for a Democratic World Order, being an attempt to apply Semantic Principles to Language Design." In other words, Dr. Bodmer attempts to show the ordinary Briton or American how he may best set about learning to read, write, or converse in a foreign language, and Professor Hogben has produced a very detailed blue-print of yet another international language. Both books make hard reading, but are extremely interesting.

In fact, Dr. Bodmer covers much more ground than the modesty of his sub-title might lead you to expect. He does what he professes to do, i.e., he shows the ordinary person what, in his opinion, is the right and what the wrong way to set about learning French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, etc. But in doing this he does infinitely more. He wanders over the history of languages and alphabets; he dissects the vocabularies and grammars of the various languages; he demonstrates their interdependence; he discourses on their pathology and the pathology of their professors; he castigates their crimes and social misdemeanours; and finally he deals with the problem of constructing a world language and deduces the principles of "language planning for a new order," upon which Professor Hogben's Interglossa is mainly based.

The student who goes to Dr. Bodmer for help in learning a foreign language should not be disappointed, but he will have to work hard and display a good deal of native intelligence if he is to succeed in picking the particular plums which he needs out of Dr. Bodmer's gigantic—and chaotic—pudding. Where Dr. Bodmer is concerned with the practical problem of how best to pick up a foreign language for the purpose of mere everyday communication by speech or writing, he is nearly always sensible, and his book is full of excellent tips and short-cuts. But his method of exposition is so discursive and disorderly that anyone who wants to use it for practical purposes will be faced by formidable difficulties. On the other hand the more idle reader will find a great deal in it and its hotchpotch of fact and theory to amuse and interest him. In its defects and in its author's prejudices he may also find a good deal to regret. He persistently attempts to lighten a heavy subject by the introduction of heavy humour, and the heaviness of his subject is nothing to the heaviness of such facetiousness as, "How long the mother-in-law will continue to be a menace to monogamy, or how long monogamy will continue to be the prevailing mores of civilised communities we cannot say." He also has a whole hive of prejudicial bees buzzing in his bonnet and therefore in his book. To construct a new international language on the simplest and most scientific lines for the bare purposes of communication between persons of different nationality at international conferences or when they are travelling and want to ask their way to the post office is an eminently useful task. To show, as Dr. Bodmer does, how an Englishman may most easily acquire enough French or Finnish for similar purposes is no less useful. But this kind of communication is not the only rational and moral use for language. Yet Dr. Bodmer continually writes as if it is, as if "literature" and the use of language for the purposes for which Cicero or Shakespeare used it is on a line with crossword puzzles, and will become a useless and despicable relic of bourgeois civilisation.

Professor Hogben's "Penguin" is a remarkable book. His Interglossa is, I think, the best attempt so far to construct an international language. Indirectly it owes a good deal to Mr. Ogden and Basic English and something to Peano and Interlingua, but as an antidote to Babel it has many advantages over both. Its vocabulary is extraordinarily ingenious, being derived entirely from Greek and Latin words to which science has given an international currency. Description or criticism of it would require much more space than is available in a review. There is one point which it is worth while drawing the author's and publisher's attention to. The vocabulary consists of 880 vocables, and to each is assigned a number. In the text of the book the number is habitually printed in brackets after the vocable. But unless I misunderstand the system, something seems to me to have gone wrong with the numbering, and it should be put right in a future edition. Over and over again the numbers assigned to vocables in the text differ from those assigned to them in the alphabetical list of vocables in Chapter XII. For instance, this applies to the last 15 vocables on page 229, to the last three on page 79, and to two on page 80. Even in the alphabetical list the word "brya" seems to have a wrong number assigned to it.

LEONARD WOOLF

SOVIET LITERATURE

25 Years of Soviet Literature (1918-1943). By GLEB STRUVE. *Routledge.* 15s.

In this volume Mr. Struve has republished without alterations his *Soviet Russian Literature* which appeared in 1935, and has added an Epilogue which brings his work up to 1943. Perhaps this method is not entirely satisfactory. Some authors are presented from two angles; others seem full of promise in the first part, but we hear nothing of them in the second. Even old mistakes are preserved, like Mr. Struve's shocking statement that Bezymensky in his poem on Mayakovsky's suicide calls Dante "that son of a bitch." Bezymensky does not speak of Dante but of D'Anthès, who killed Pushkin in a duel, and the point of the remark is that Mayakovsky concealed such a murderer in himself. Still, these are minor points. For many reasons it is good that this book was reprinted and extended. It has many virtues. It is remarkably comprehensive, and Mr. Struve seems abler than most at getting hold of new Russian books. He is extremely fair-minded and keeps his head and his sense of justice in a world dominated by political passions. Indeed he is so fair that sometimes he seems unnecessarily kind. Above all, he finds his way through the tangled slogans which make it so hard for the ordinary reader to find out what Soviet literature is doing. Useful alike as an introduction and as a guide this book is indispensable for anyone who wishes to find what has been written in Russia since the Revolution.

The picture, it must be admitted, is not very inspiring. In 1918 Russian literature was enjoying a magnificent revival. The best writers supported the Revolution or at least continued to live in Russia. But before long it was clear that their work was done and that a new age had begun, an age in which literature was forced by "Socialist Realism" to serve an immediate social purpose. The inevitable result followed that as literature it was seldom very good and that somehow it failed in its social purpose. Mr. Struve rightly stresses the difficulties against which writers have had to contend and points out how often they have been able to surmount them. But the struggle has taken too much out of them and impaired their vitality. There must be something wrong when so fine a poet as Boris

Pasternak devotes years of his life to translating from the Georgian or to composing epics on the Revolution of 1905 in a way quite hostile to his lyrical gift. No Soviet writer of the first class seems to be able or allowed to write in his own way and to say what he really wishes.

Official control also impaired the standards of writing and of workmanship. It is true that the attempt to create a truly proletarian literature had to be abandoned and that in recent years writers are encouraged to study the Russian classics. But the attacks on "bourgeois Formalism" are really aimed at any experiments in technique and show the distrust which is still felt of artists who wish to be different from others. The Soviet writers may perhaps not write worse Russian than Dostoevsky, but they do not write so well as Turgenev; they are often careless in their management of their stories and they have not yet learned how to insert propaganda without making it too obvious. In such an atmosphere poetry has suffered most. No doubt our times are hostile to it everywhere, but it is surprising that the Russian Revolution, which in its first years inspired some noble work, should so soon have produced little even of minor interest. The reason surely is that art can never flourish when it must do what it is told.

There is a ray of hope on the horizon. The war has made the Russians extremely conscious of their country and of its literary traditions. The great writers of the past are now honoured because they were Russians, no matter what their political opinions were. Their works are well edited and published in large numbers, and writers are expected to study them. The powerful emotions of the war have led to a spate of creative writing both in prose and in verse, and though much of it is of a temporary interest, some of it has more lasting qualities. The signs are promising when Anna Akhmatova, after twenty years of silence, is allowed to publish a volume, when Pasternak returns to lyrical poetry, and Tikhonov celebrates the defence of Leningrad.

C. M. BOWRA

SICKERT

Sickert: Edited by LILIAN BROWSE, with an essay on his life and notes on his paintings; and with an essay on his art by R. H. WILENSKI. *Faber*. 21s.

This intelligent selection of sixty-odd works by Sickert, introduced by Miss Browse and Mr. Wilenski, is a credit to all concerned: to the editor, the essayist, the photographer and the publishers. We are grateful to them for having produced in 1944 so presentable a volume, and for having shown—let other publishers and editors take note—that such volumes can be produced. The greatly daring person who shall some day attempt a full-length portrait of Sickert, with all his gifts and absurdities, his contradictions and his charm, will assuredly owe something to Miss Browse's short but thorough biographical note and more to Mr. Wilenski's critical essay. Meanwhile we can profit by both, as well as enjoying the photographs which have been skilfully chosen to illustrate the artist's progress.

The critical essay is particularly welcome because, so far as I know, it is the first serious and scholarly attempt to appraise Sickert's achievement and give some plausible account of his development. Mr. Wilenski pays Sickert the compliment of treating him as an artist. To do this it was necessary to push into a corner—its proper place—what he calls "the Sickert Legend." Nevertheless, I must warn him that if he hopes to persuade the British public, the book-makers and newspaper-men, that Sickert is important because he was a fine painter and not because he was a buffoon, he will be disappointed. Rightly he insists that Sickert started late, and that the years of apprenticeship with Whistler were little better than a false start. Consequently he was always in an ambiguous relation to his great contemporaries and, indeed, to the main current of European art. This may account, as Mr. Wilenski seems to suggest that it does, for some of his aberrations and paradoxical opinions; but, personally, I attribute them rather to the fact that Sickert was a born play-actor. I should like to believe that he was as much influenced by Cézanne, Lautrec, Bonnard and Maurice Denis as our author makes out that he was. He may have been: what is certain, and what, not quite but almost alone amongst critics, Mr. Wilenski has noticed, is that Sickert was influenced appreciably by Tintoretto. How this patent fact should have escaped so many searching eyes I am at a loss to understand. In the best of Sickert whatever is neither original nor French is pretty sure to be Venetian. The English contribution is negligible almost.

Mr. Wilenski is the one person by whose opinion I set any store who admires the *Echoes*. To me they seem the only works in which the artist sacrifices his integrity. Surely they are Sickerts of the "Sickert Legend"? they are Sickert playing the fool. They seem meant to take the public by surprise and win it with a joke. They are superficial; and, in consequence, that impeccable sense of tone for once deserts the master, or rather, being unwanted, never comes into play. The colour in the *Echoes* is apt to be lamentable. Not so lamentable, however, as the reproduction (as I suppose one must call it) of *Sirens Abroad* might lead you to suppose. That chromophotograph is not in the least like a Sickert or anything else—except a chromophotograph.

CLIVE BELL

Unity of Europe. By HILDA MONTE. *Gollancz*. 6s.

No one should be misled by the title of this useful book. This is not yet another futile scheme for a European federation but a lucid attempt to outline a common economic policy for European Socialists. Miss Monte begins by analysing the nature and causes of the economic disunity of Europe—the paradox that, whereas industrialised Europe suffers from a shortage of markets, the primitive agricultural countries of Eastern Europe are in desperate need of the products of industry. She then argues that if industrial Europe would and could develop this hinterland and so create a stable European home market, not only the European but the world problem would be near solution.

What distinguishes *Unity of Europe* from similar proposals for an expansionist post-war economy is Miss Monte's sharp appreciation of political realities. She realises that such proposals will never be adopted by national coalition governments of the Right and Left; and she rightly argues that the only political basis for expansionist economics is a united workers' and peasants' movement in each European country strong enough to seize power and to unite for a common policy. She probably seriously underrates the short-term clashes of interest both between workers' and peasants' movements within each country and between backward and advanced countries. But at least she exposes the futility of those Socialist leaders who hope to achieve a satisfactory peace settlement by compromise with the representatives of landlordism and monopoly capital. She also argues that Vansittartism is an attempt to popularise a reactionary economic settlement by the exploitation of anti-German sentiments.

Very wisely Miss Monte leaves the question open how far Britain could or would collaborate in a united Europe. She writes as a German Socialist, and her book will probably receive a large measure of support among leaders of non-German resistance movements. Yet the attitude of Britain, and in particular of the British Labour Movement, may well decide whether

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reactionary and disunited Conservative forces or Left-wing movements, capable of unity, achieve power in Europe after the war. For this reason *Unity of Europe* should be studied by British Socialists. It may help them to decide whether they should seek to influence the peace settlement by maintaining their present Coalition Government: or whether they should cast in their lot with the European resistance movements in open opposition to the forces which brought us to the edge of disaster.

Week-end Competitions

No. 734

Set by G. W. Stonier

Competitors are invited to enrich mythology with a few modern tutelary deities. The description of each deity and his cult should not exceed 200 words. Entries should be received by March 6th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 731

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Competitors in the past have excelled in providing imaginary Last Words for the living as well as for the dead, and it is perhaps prudent for each of us to choose our own in advance. The usual prizes are offered for the best suggestions for the Last Words of any three of the following characters (competitors may send as many entries as they like). Narcissus, Lot's Wife, Holofernes, Constantine, Calvin, Queen Elizabeth, Milton, Wren, Lord Chesterfield, Fontenelle, Sterne, Bentley, Catherine the Great, Rousseau, Fouché, Dr. Arnold, Disraeli, Wagner, Walter Pater, Henry James, Dreyfus, Landru, Laval, Mistinguett, Ribbentrop, Lord Baldwin, Lady Oxford, Lady Astor, Gandhi, Mussolini, General Montgomery, Hemingway, P. G. Wodehouse, Noel Coward, Allan M. Laing and the Editor of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

Report by Raymond Mortimer.

Entries very numerous and dazzling. It was careless of me to include Chesterfield, who managed excellent last words on his own. (" Give Dayrolles a chair.") Though the personages were in roughly chronological order, many competitors aimed at the Constantine who plays cricket and the Bentley who invented clerihews. Many entries were almost or exactly identical—Hemingway, for instance, went on repeating " Now the bell tolls for me." No fewer than nine competitors scored three bulls. After much pondering I divided these into two classes. and I recommend 12*s.* each for D. M., W. R. Hughes and F. C. C.; 6*s.* each for Guy Innes, L. E. J., S.-Ldr. John D. K. Lloyd, William Bliss, I. C. Saul, Maurice Vehemme. I append a selection, to which I should have liked to give even more space, of other entries.

Lot's Wife : I don't expect justice, but I do hope they'll take Lot's story with a pinch of salt.

Henry James : Mountain your molehills, my dear, mountain your molehills.

Dizzy (an extract from Lady Bradford's letter): ". . . It appears he had been breathless for some hours (you remember how asthmatic he sometimes was—hardly able to whisper), and they thought he was repeating that he wanted to die. S. says she can't forget the scornful look he gave her when she said ' Poor darling, of course you do.' No: he wanted her to dye his last, dear straggly locks which had gone quite white. After that he was easier and turned on his side, murmuring, ' The truth spoils everything—even politics and love.' They were the last words he spoke."

D. M.

Milton : Night will bring back my day.

Sterne : As he stretched out his long fingers towards me; " Poor shivering wretch," said I, " with no flesh to thy bones."

Disraeli : " No," he said, " I am not afraid. Let me but speak with the Queen of Heaven, and I shall do well enough."
W. R. HUGHES

Henry James : . . . a sense, as it were, of clarity, of being, in fact, most indubitably " all there," or rather, in these so familiar surroundings, more accurately all here, since a few hours hence one must expect to find oneself, how irrevocably and strangely, all *there*.

P. G. Wodehouse : Good Lord, how cold it is; surely you have a sort of international mind, what? Can't *you* see I only meant to be a good fellow all round?

Walter Pater : I find in the daily rhythm of convalescence, in the simple hieratic completion of the temperature chart, even in the steam of the ivory-white Benger's, a ritual significance that consoles me.

Allan M. Laing :

Eternal Judge, I'd have you know
If merit here be recognised—
As my apt words were weekly prized
By learned Statesmen down below—
I, as the dread Assizes near
For my last entry need not fear.

F. C. C.

Henry James : However comma. . . .
Wagner : Score this passage for harps.
Lot's Wife : The Lord hath preserved me.
Laval : Service, Monsieur! GUY INNES

Narcissus : Dear me!

Dreyfus : La deuxième fois, voyez-vous, cela frappe moins dur, la mort.

Laval : Va! On s'arrangera. L. E. J.

The Editor, N.S. & N. : We are going to join the Great Minority.

Mussolini : Ave Maria Nostra.

Bentley : I bring but an indifferent text—but He will emend it.
S.-LDR. JOHN D. K. LLOYD

Calvin : But this is impossible! I *can't* be damned!

Wagner : More noise!

Henry James : Eternity should enable me to extend my sentences.

Lord Baldwin : I left it to poor Neville just in time.
WILLIAM BLISS

Narcissus : ἆρ' ἔστι μοι κάτοπτρον ἐν τοῖς νερτέροις ; (Is there a mirror for me amid those below?)

Mussolini (our latter-day Cæsar) : Prodidi, Perdidi, Perii.

Allan M. Laing (to attendant Medium): Next week's comp. . . . that planchette don't forget . . . (Expires).
I. C. SAUL

P. G. Wodehouse : The R.A.F. is dam efficient!

Laval : Encore un petit moment, Monsieur le bourreau!

General Montgomery : Let the press photographers in.
MAURICE VEHEMME

Narcissus :

I should have liked a little more time for reflection.
P. A. HALL

No flowers. E. M. G. JONES

But whether any flower could do me justice, remains to be seen.
PAX

What a lovely corpse I shall make!
ALEXANDER REID

Lot's Wife :

I wonder why I feel so thirsty? ANON

Such nice young men, but they didn't seem interested in either of the girls.
REGINALD REYNOLDS

Darling, I must have just the *teeniest* peep.
W. H. G. PRICE

Holofernes :

Judith, there'll never be another woman in my life.
P. M. PIVAWER

Constantine :

Perhaps, after all, I should have plumped for Mithras.
BLIG

Queen Elizabeth :

Yesterday a young courtier smiled at me.
F. J. DOWNER

" Marry! " (or was it " Mary "?)
H. F. BATTEY

More rouge, you fool. F. GROSS

Wren :

" Many mansions! " God! What a paradise!
M. TRENCH

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"My dear," he said, "do not grieve. No man could move the City Fathers, save he called down fire from heaven—and I doubt if even then.
C. J. G.

Lord Chesterfield :

I trust Abraham's bosom was lately groomed.
H. R. Shaw

Fontenelle :

The first hundred years were the worst. P. W.

Sterne :

A final visitor, but alas not the beautiful grisset.
S. A. Goodsten

Bentley :

Death, sir, effects more than bishops can, and in heaven, as I suppose, *ars emendationis* will be precluded by authentic texts. However, I anticipate the thanks of Milton with some complacency.
Marcus Whiffen

After this difficult passage, the translation is plain.
R. J. P. Hewison

Don't confuse me with any Clerihew fellow.
Sir Robert Witt

Nicholas my son,
Will continue the work I've begun.
Already h's efforts have brought him a
Guinea or two from Mr. Mortimer.
T. J. Hunt

Catherine the Great :

I wonder—is He handsome ?
W. G. Bebbington

Rousseau :

Moi, je. . . . Anthony Curtis

A priest ? I have nothing left to confess !
I. M. D. Little

Fouché :

Si Judas n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.
Lady Juliet Duff

Are there policemen in heaven ?
G. J. Blundell

Disraeli :

No primroses by request.
Lady Juliet Duff

We authors, Peter. Pibwob

Dreyfus :

Juste Ciel ! Encore un jugement !
Allan M. Laing

Laval :

I swear I only wanted to double-cross Hitler.
Leo Drucker

Si j'étais anglais, on m'aurait fait ambassadeur.
Markrus

Mistinguett :

C'est le dernier pas qui cote.
Lady Juliet Duff

N'oubliez-pas, elles sont assurées !
Peter Hadley

I'm on my last legs. P. W.

Lord Baldwin :

Had I but served my country better than I served my King ! G. H. Leggott

Lady Oxford :

Where is my Diary ? This is an event worthy of record. William Farrell

I always wanted to meet Pitt.
Capt. C. B. M. Heywood

. . . Galloping home. L. Marshall Jones

He's a very dear friend of mine—God, I mean.
R. Cecil Owen

Lady Astor :

And be sure you give the mourners lemonade.
P. M. Pivawer

I look forward to having a serious talk with Him on the subject of ambrosia. Katharine Dowling

Brandy—quick ! Pte. T. R. Lawrence

Gandhi :

Qualis pereo opifex. C. B.

I protest, but I won't resist. Leo Drucken

Why so violent, Death ? . . .
Paul Schuleberger

I am not, of course, dying merely to embarrass the British Government. Douglas Hawson

Mussolini :

Has my aeroplane come ? Sir Robert Witt

It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done.
Jean M. Grant

General Montgomery :

I wouldn't be dying unless I was sure I could do it. Pte. T. R. Lawrence

As dawn broke, the aged Duke roused himself and was heard to mutter, " Legions . . . legions of 'em . . . and no supply nor transport. . . . Good morning, Sir, I have just come to take over." C. J. G.

I am fully prepared. Peter or no Peter, I shall be inside those pearly gates by Monday morning.
" Uncle Arfa "

I wonder what it will be like to travel incognito ?
J. R. Till

Don't forget—beret on the coffin.
Richard Pomfret

Hemingway :

I obscenity on the lot of you.
W. G. Bebbington

P. G. Wodehouse :

Do you think this will make chaps want to buy my books again ? L. W. Bailey

Noel Coward :

. . . but one never became Prime Minister, did one ? J. E. Arnold

Harps or shovels, dear ? I couldn't care less. It's dying in the Provinces that hurts.
Kathleen A. Bullivant

I've enjoyed my life tremendously. Thank you terribly, all of you. Alec Clifton-Taylor

Too theatre, my dear : exit Hero slowly. The curtain falls. Markrus

I'm simply dying pro patria, and it's terribly dulce.
Mrs. Sewell

(1) " I'll see you again." (2) " I think He'll be too, too divine." Mehitabel

I call it *Swan Song*. It goes like this. Where's the piano ? Leslie Johnson

I have tried to make my life a happy life and an efficient life. Thank God the bloody business is over.
Beryl Collins

My dear, I feel like *death*. Pontifex

Allan M. Laing :

It's all yours now, F. C. C.
Pte. T. R. Lawrence

I have been judged enough. H. M. Hood

In next week's result, for " Towan " read " Kicked The " Joyce Johnson

I should like to have survived F. C. C.
E. W. Fordham

O Final Judge, *shall* the first be last ?
Richard Pomfret

The Editor of " The New Statesman and Nation " :

No spectators, please.

Left to the last. . . . J. A. R. Pimlott

I am about to pass through the Great Turnstile.
Stanley J. Sharpless

The immediate future as one sees it is not without danger. William Farrell

At last I join the majority.
I. M. D. Little

Dear friends, do not grieve for me : I am going to a better place where there will be nothing but wailing and gnashing of teeth. C. B.

I shall sit on the left hand of God.
Vivien Bulkley

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